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MY MEMORIES

BY

THE COUNTESS OF MUNSTER

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MY MEMORIES
AND MISCELLANIES

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Wilhelmina Monston

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THE COUNTESS OF MUNSTER

LONDON
EVELEIGH NASH
1904

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FOREWORD

Some valued friends have lately expressed a wish that I should write my reminiscences, as my long life, they think, should embrace not a few interesting events which may be worth recording; so, after suffering pangs of nervous reluctance, I take up my pen—but oh! at once I feel how altered all things seem. I look back down a vista of seventy-three years, and as I try to put thoughts into words this adage comes up:

> *"How cruelly sweet are the echoes that start*
> *When memory plays an old tune on the heart!"*

And—one never can *forget! Some changes are so odd, so startling — and yet so insignificant. However, I decide to make the effort, and instantly small things crop up to remind me of time's flight. For example, I used in days of yore only quill pens: now I am writing with a horrid thing called a "J," hard steel, and the ink does not run so easily nor so merrily as it did then. But hush! Is there not an old but very true saying, that it is only the indifferent workmen who find fault with*

their tools? In the present instance, however, it is a work-woman who grumbles. Perhaps that may make a difference, or am I taking unfair advantage of the chivalry of my male readers? Well! all I can do is to claim their forbearance, and beg them to remember that I am an old woman—weak, sad, and tired; only waiting—waiting to go Home "for good and all," as the children say.

BOOK I

MY MEMORIES

Railshead, Isleworth, near Richmond.

I

CHILDHOOD AT RAILSHEAD

1830–37

I remember, I remember,
  How my childhood fleeted by,
The mirth of its December,
  And the warmth of its July!
W. H. Praed.

I was born on June 27, 1830 (the day after the death of King George IV.). My birthplace was Dun House, Montrose; and, on my father's side I am *tout ce qu'il y a de plus Ecossais*, as he was the second son of the then Earl of Cassilis (afterwards the first Marquis of Ailsa), but my mother was the youngest daughter of the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.) by the famous, fascinating and unhappy actress, Dorothy Jordan.

King William IV. had nine children by Mrs.

Jordan,* and her home and that of the Duke of Clarence and their children was for years at Bushey House, in Bushey Park, and for long Bushey was a happy and beloved home to the FitzClarence family —until, in fact, the Duke of Clarence married the Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen; then, of course, and perforce, that happy home came to an end. But I feel more than rejoiced to be enabled now to give my affectionate and respectful testimony to the gracious and Christianlike love and tenderness ever offered to the poor actress's children by the Duchess of Clarence, afterwards Queen Adelaide, who, to the day of her death, treated the numerous FitzClarence family as only a loving and gentle woman could.

I remember Queen Adelaide and her kind acts well, and know what it must have cost her tender heart at times to see this beautiful family around her (her husband's but not her own), and yet she ever

* They were: (1) George, first Earl of Munster; (2) Frederick, in the Army; (3) Adolphus, a rear-admiral; (4) Augustus, in holy orders; (5) Sophia, married the first Lord de l'Isle; (6) Mary, m. Colonel Fox; (7) Elizabeth, m. the Earl of Errol; (8) Augusta, m. first, Hon. John Kennedy Erskine, secondly, Lord John Frederick Gordon; (9) Amelia, m. Viscount Falkland. All the eight younger children were raised to the rank of the younger children of a marquis.

MRS JORDAN.

loved them, and helped them with a mother's tenderness!

I pray God bless her for this, and we may be sure that at this moment she is reaping the benefits of her unselfish Christian love to those who were much in her power for good or for evil. It was an awkward, I might have said a painful, position to all parties, had not God's love filled the good Queen's heart with motherly kindness for those orphan children and grandchildren (of which latter I was one) of her husband. Her goodness to them lived on even after the King's death, until she breathed her last, and I am proud of being her godchild.

A noble queen she was and, better, a true lady; and better still than both, a loving tender woman, who, seeing well the wrong, the pity of a thing, knew how, and when, to use her eyelids—instead of her eyes—only opening them again to reassure and to sympathise.

Peace be to her memory.

* * * * *

When quite small children we lived in a charming brick house situated on the River Thames. It was called "Railshead" in conse-

quence, I suppose, of its situation, for a long iron-work railing ran along the whole of one side of the garden, the house standing back above it. This terrace was raised high above the river, and I loved, as a child, to sit perched at the top of a certain large iron-work basket, full of geraniums, and watch the boats and barges as they skimmed noiselessly by.

I know not why, but all my life, although I have visited many foreign countries, the loveliness of no other river, however picturesque its surroundings, has ever touched my heart as the "homey" and innocent beauty of our River Thames. But I confess to being a real John Bull!

Beneath the Railshead terrace, along the side of the river, ran a long narrow pathway, much overgrown by green rushes, slender reeds, and a peculiar kind of tall white lily, and I would, as a wee child, at a certain hour every day, perch my small self at the top of the large wire basket mentioned above, which was conveniently placed close to the terrace railing, and watch for the coming of a certain steamboat—a miracle in those days!—which, as she slid by, I declared, and believed, sent enormous waves to the shore to announce her arrival to the

excited lilies, which, with the rushes, emitted a peculiar rustle-rustle-rustle—I can hear it to this day—as they bowed their dignified and civil greeting to the passing water-monster.

I perfectly remember my delight and amazement the first time I saw the steamboat ruffling the river and rustling the lilies beneath our terrace. The steamboat was named the *Endeavour*, being, it was thought in those primitive days, a good sensible name for such an undertaking as the steamer was, she being the first, and, at that time, the only passenger boat.

We could see pretty Richmond Bridge from Railshead terrace, and it was very amusing to me to watch the *Endeavour* as she bowed her black funnels to pass beneath the archways. Soon — very soon — there were other steamboats, and then, like everything else, the novelty passed away.

My paternal grandparents' (Lord and Lady Ailsa's) house, called "St. Margaret's," was next to ours. The terraces joined, and there was a door of communication between the two gardens, not much used, alas! in later days, for my mother, having married a second time, had thus given

dire offence to the old lord and lady—a quarrel which was never made up.

My mother's father, King William IV., used often to drive from London to Isleworth to see his daughter and us children, whom he fondly loved.

I cannot have been more than three or four years old when I had a very dangerous illness ; in fact, I nearly died from brain fever, and the old King William, hearing of my mother's grief (she had not been very long a widow) drove down to see her.

How strange it is that certain solitary events make impressions on a child's mind, but rarely anything consecutive remains. I distinctly remember at this time feeling a terrible pain in my head, then I remember the sudden appearance of a certain Doctor Julius coming towards my bed, carrying a large china soup-plate full of horrible, struggling, greasy, slimy-looking black things, which he seemed to be manipulating between his fingers and thumb. He approached me, with my weeping mother, and—I remember no more ! Of course the horrid creatures were leeches (I was subsequently acquainted with this fact), and they were placed on my poor little head, and after-

wards I was told one of those beasts, more hungry, we may suppose, than its fellows, got hold of a vein on the top of my head, and had to be forcibly torn away, and Julius had to sit for hours with his finger on the lacerated spot to prevent my bleeding to death. As it was, I nearly died, and this was the cause of one of the kind old King's visits. He drove down to Railshead in his chariot (then pronounced *charrott*). Of course I was too dangerously ill to see him arrive, but when I got better, and the dear old man came again, I was then permitted to see his departure from the nursery window, in my nurse's arms. With much glee I gazed on the two postboys, in pale blue jackets, white breeches, and white beaver hats. My dear mother told me the kind old King wept at seeing me so weak and frail, but he was delighted when my mother asked me, "Mina, do you know who this is?" and I answered, "It is grandpapa!" My mother thereupon burst into tears, and said, throwing her arms round his neck, "Yours, Sir, is the first face she has known for weeks!" She never forgot this joy, and I never forgot the postboys and the grey horses.

* * * * *

My Memories

One of my earliest recollections of Railshead was, when I was a very little girl, my mother took me to the theatre at Richmond-on-Thames. I think, although I cannot say this for certain (and it is not a matter of great import) that the performance must have been either a pantomime or a circus. More likely the latter, as there were any number of horses, donkeys ridden by monkeys, and so forth; besides, surely a small person of my age would not otherwise have been taken. My mother had been asked to "bespeak" the play, but I knew but little about it, except that my nurse, Crockett, looked cross when first she heard of it, and said (not before my mother, of course) that it was a sin to take such a "brat" to the theatre. I, being at that time rather a good-looking "brat," was often taken about to be shown by my mother, dressed very smartly, and, in the present case, the fact that Crockett was told that she must, of necessity, be one of the party rather seemed to compensate in her eyes for the folly and "the sin" of the thing.

I remember when we entered the theatre my delight knew no bounds, for we were received by

two "gentlemen" in uniform, who walked before us carrying candles! Then, young as I was, I recognised that the band played "God Save the King," as we marched in in great, and quite undeserved, dignity.

I don't know what the performance was. I only know those were lovely horses and donkeys with long ears, ridden by monkeys—so it *must* have been a circus. After the first part, and quite suddenly, I began to feel "queer." Then the lights seemed to dance about instead of the horses, and at last I said, quite unashamed, "Mama! I'm going to be——sick!" My mother spoke hastily to one of the gentlemen who were with us, and who seemed to know his way about. He ran hurriedly out of the box. After a few minutes of agony, a most gentlemanlike-looking man, who I afterwards heard called "the manager," whispered something to my mother, caught me up in his arms and carried me down some dark, forbidding-looking passages, lit by single gas-lamps. After all these years I feel it must have looked as if I were being carried to instant execution—or to solitary confinement at least! But I was too unwell then to care; besides

Crockett was bringing up the rear ; and after what I thought an interminable and most dangerous journey, we found ourselves at the back of the stage, behind a curtain, in a small closet of a room, and with the largest basin I ever saw, and—I have never been so sick since! After a little, Crockett brought me some eau-de-Cologne and I got better. The kind gentleman again appeared and carried me—this time to my mother's carriage ; and I remember feeling deeply injured that "God Save the King" was not played again at my exit!

I was taken home by Crockett, fell fast asleep during the journey, and remembered no more. Years afterwards I came across the old basin in a shop in Richmond, and felt I had found an old friend.

* * * * *

When I was a few years older, and still living at Railshead, a very painful circumstance occurred which it took me long years (not to forget, for that I never shall) to get over.

Our nurseries—four rooms, quite small—used to *donner* on the river, and often, like naughty children after being put to bed, I and my sister,

in the summer when the windows were wide open, would sit upright in our beds, sometimes putting our pillows under us to raise us higher (always supposing Crockett was not looking!) and watch the little boats and barges skim along in the darkness, with their golden-coloured lamps, while the oars as they broke the water would shimmer and gleam tremulously—especially if there were a moon appearing through the trees on the Surrey side of the river—like sheet lightning. Sometimes the occupants of the boats would sing (men's and women's voices), often to a guitar, and delight us as they glided by, for even at that early age I loved music.

One night, however, something awful happened. I was almost asleep; it was a very hot night, and suddenly I was awakened by a woman's scream, then another, and then a man's rough voice and a splash! I started up in my bed and called the nurse, who slept in the next room with the door open: "Crockett! Crockett!"

Then, raising myself, I saw that my sister Millicent was asleep, but Crockett was up, and I could see her through the doorway, with half her body (in nothing but her nightgown) out of

the window. She was evidently much excited, and dancing about from one window to the other to find the one she could see through best.

"Crockett, what is it?" I called.

"Nonsense; go to sleep, Miss Mina."

But I couldn't. So, getting up (Millicent was still asleep) I ran noiselessly along the room and stood behind the nurse, who was still hanging out of the window. But I could not be still, for I heard footsteps of men running down to the river side, and Crocket called out in a sort of hoarse whisper, which should have wakened the dead, to the butler, who also had been roused:

"What is the matter?"

Crockett got no answer, and presently I heard his step and that of another man, then the dragging of a boat out of the boathouse. I could hear them jump into the boat, the oars were jerked into their rowlocks, and then I heard them rowing off, as if for dear life.

I could bear no more. I tugged at the nurse's nightgown and began to cry.

"Where is —— (I forget the butler's name) gone to? and what—oh, *what was that scream?*"

"Nonsense! you tiresome child! Go to bed.

It was only Mary (the nurserymaid) who has the nightmare!"

"What?" I said, for living so long in the country I knew what a "mare" was. "What! in bed with her?" Of course that made her scream, and I no longer wondered at it; but I quietly went to bed again, only fearful lest Mary's night mare might take a fancy to me; and then, I thought, shouldn't *I* have screamed!

The next day, however—little pitchers have long ears!—I overheard every one speaking about the "scream," but none of them mentioned Mary; and I also could not understand whose throat had been cut "from ear to ear," and a nameless horror came over me. When night came I begged Crockett to have the nursery windows closed so that Mary's night mare might be kept outside!

Years afterwards I heard that a poor woman had been murdered in a barge by the bargeman, who had cut her throat and thrown her into the river. I was too young then to be told the particulars, but the bargeman was hanged.

II

BRIGHTON AND WILLIAM IV

1830-37

What are the wild waves saying,
  Sister, the whole day long?
But ever amid our playing
  I hear but their low, lone song.
LONGFELLOW.

Take, O boatman, twice thy fee,
Take—I give it willingly,
For invisible to thee
Spirits twain have crossed with me!
UHLAND.

I. THE CHAIN PIER

I HAVE remarked before how curious it is that one only remembers facts concerning one's childhood by fits and starts, and piecemeal. I wonder why? Why do I remember distinctly this fact or this person, and why not that fact and that person? This is eminently the case with my juvenile

WILLIAM IV

recollections concerning Brighton; but as to one thing, despite my fragmentary way of telling my story, I must beg my kind readers' minds to be completely at rest. It is that whatever I relate *is absolutely and literally true;* and truth, after all, is worth something.

So to begin about Brighton.

I love Brighton, every stone in it; but more especially its ancient stones. But what *to me* are ancient stones are not its oldest, for they would date long before I was "born or thought of!"

Brighton, *as* Brighton, sprang into existence—an acknowledged existence—in 1782, when George, Prince of Wales of that day, visited it, and straightway loved the place (and apparently a great many people in it!), with a lasting love, too, of which his capricious nature rarely showed itself capable.

The original Brighton dates back to quite a century and a half ago, or more, being then styled "Brighthelmstone." We are told that it was then only a fishing village, the very site of which was on one dreadful day swallowed up by the sea, a catastrophe which the modern Brightonians seem to do their best to prevent occurring again; hence the

strong, beautiful, modern sea wall, which has become one of the most fascinating and enjoyable of promenades, one might say, in all England; and hence those enticing buttresses which shelve down into the sea, forming a fruitful source of danger to nursery-maids and their charges, and to small independent boys, who seem to take every advantage of the tempting danger so liberally held out to them.

One irreparable calamity, however, in spite of all the modern Brightonians' care, has within the last few years overtaken Brighton. On December 5, 1896, the beloved old Chain Pier was utterly demolished. On that morning people were startled from their beds by the appalling news that the whole Chain Pier had collapsed in the night! This old structure had heroically borne the brunt of the wind and of the wild sea waves for over seventy years, and already there had not been those wanting who grumblingly complained that the pier was "not safe," had "become unsightly," that its ancient glory of paint and polish had faded, that it began to look dilapidated, &c. New piers were beginning to be built, but *I* always felt that an old friend stood there, sad and lone, but dignified, like an old

beau of the ancient school. Now, however, he has gone. He had stood the day before his disappearance just as ever, but in the night, alas! the sea had been wilder than usual, and half an hour before the tide was at its highest—it came from the south-east—my dearly-loved old friend, my old beau, gave up all for lost, and with a crash the disaster supervened. Many spectators expected and awaited the blow, and in an instant, with a roar, two piles disappeared, the wreck being the matter of a few minutes, and before surprise or regret could be expressed, the head of the pier, the dear old "deck" which had so often been paced by the Sailor King, was also gone!

Oh! how I loved that old pier! How I mourned its loss, for it was a personal friend! I am quite old enough to remember the yearly visits of the Sailor King and his good Queen Adelaide to Brighton, where constantly I, in company with my nurse or mother, used to walk on the Chain Pier. King William said (I have heard him) that he liked pacing its deck, as it was the place that reminded him of what had ever been the happiest place in the whole world to him—the deck of a ship. Oh! the "Wooden Walls of Old

England!" What would he say to the changes now? I ever felt that the old Chain Pier was the only picturesque object in all Brighton, and a few weeks before its disastrous disappearance I wrote a letter to one of the local papers, begging the authorities not to demolish it as they threatened, imploring them to let it die a natural death. A few days later the "old beau" took his fate into his own hands, and after a short struggle—was not! All the next day pieces, both large and small, of the *débris* came rushing and dashing upon the beach, and I rejoice to say that I obtained a small piece, and keep it as a relic of what was to me an old and loved friend.

> They stood aloof, the scars remaining
> Like cliffs which had been rent asunder,
> A dreary sea now flows between.

Perhaps some of my friends will forgive my describing a little scene that took place one morning on the Chain Pier, while my mother and I were walking there with the old Sailor King. I did not understand it then, but I do now—the beauty of it.

We were pacing up and down the deck, when an old Brighton dame of the *bourgeois* class

appeared at our side. She had evidently been admitted to the pier by accident, as for the two hours or so, during which the King generally enjoyed his deck-walk, no one was admitted, unless he or she belonged to the suite. The old lady had been to the "fancy shop," of which there used to be many on the pier, and, probably, while there the saleswoman told her that his Majesty and suite were on the deck. She was greatly flustered, and in her agitation, when she left the shop, ran into the King's very arms. He was so well known by sight that she recognised him at once, and, much perturbed, would have turned tail and fled. But the old sailor gentleman would have none of that. He quickly approached the perturbed old lady, and, putting his hand on her arm, kindly addressed her:

"Madam, whither away so fast? May I not have the pleasure of making your acquaintance?" and he took off his hat.

"Oh, your Majesty!" exclaimed the confused dame, "I never thought of *your* being here or I should not have come!"

"But since you *are* here, and we have met, may I not have the pleasure of your acquaintance?"

Then quite a lively conversation ensued, pleasant to the royal and kindly sailor and never afterwards forgotten by the delighted old recipient of his chivalrous civility. Of King William it may be truly said that :

> . . . He bore without abuse
> The grand old name of "gentleman."

II. THE PAVILION

King William and Queen Adelaide came to Brighton professedly *pour s'amuser*, and as far as possible to cast off the trammels of royalty, which always more or less taxed the old King's patience. One or other of his daughters generally dined of an evening at the Pavilion, and the King's greatest pleasure consisted in sending every morning to the two principal hotels in Brighton—there were not so many hotels then as there are now—desiring that their visitors' list should be submitted to him. This took place during the King's breakfast, in order that his Majesty might see whether any of his personal friends were in the town ; and should the names of any be registered who were pleasing to the King, a command was

forthwith sent inviting the party, or parties, to dinner that evening.

Now King William, from the varied circumstances of his life, had a much larger acquaintance than most individuals in his position ; but he also had the peculiarity, which seems to be one of our Royal Family's especial gifts—he rarely forgot a name, but *never* a face.

On one evening a clergyman had been invited, of some quite ordinary name, such as Smith or Jones ; anyhow it was a name which the King thought he knew as belonging to an old acquaintance. When the hour arrived for the King and Queen to enter the room at the Pavilion where the company were assembled, the King generally took the arm of one of his daughters, so that she might mention the guests' names to the King, who thereupon shook hands and said a few kindly words of welcome. This evening my mother chanced to be the King's guide. Everything went off well, the King, with his usual graciousness, shaking hands and bidding the gentlemen and ladies welcome. Suddenly, however, the King stopped short before a gentleman garbed as a clergyman, and before my mother could say a

word, he exclaimed in a voice of mingled astonishment and annoyance, "And who the d——l are *you*, sir? I never asked *you!*"

My mother always used to say, in telling the story, that she really thought she should have fainted from horror at the moment. The poor gentleman looked much distressed at first, but quickly recovering himself, he said with great dignity:

"I confess, your Majesty, that your Majesty's command took me completely by surprise, as I have never been so honoured before; but, as there was no other clergyman of my name in the hotel, I conceived it my duty to obey the command."

By this time the King had recovered himself. With a few pleasant words and shaking hands kindly with the now mollified clergyman, he passed on to his other guests; but my mother said that she felt distressed all through dinner. The old King, too, felt how discourteous he had been, and was determined to mend matters thoroughly, so directly after dinner was over, just as, at the royal signal, people had risen to leave the room, the King stood up, singled out a glass, had it filled, and said in a loud voice that all should hear:

"Ladies and gentlemen, fill your glasses; I propose a toast. Let us drink to the health of my new friend, the Rev. Mr. ——, and to our long friendship."

This gracious act healed all soreness, and the clergyman felt himself happy and honoured.

I must not forget how kind Queen Adelaide used to be to the children in Brighton at that time. Her Majesty used to organise amusements for them, for she and the King were real child-lovers. It must have been a great grief to her that her own two little ones died in infancy. She used every Christmas Eve to prepare an enormous Christmas tree, which was lit up with tapers, while from the boughs were hung gilded fruits—apples, pears, walnuts, &c.—and innumerable gifts of value for her ladies and for the guests young and old. The children were made to walk into a room in the Pavilion, called the "Dragon-room," by twos and twos. On one occasion I remember the two youngest children, who chanced to be my sister Millicent and Lucius Cary, the only son of Lord Falkland, led the way hand-in-hand into the wonderful room, the ceiling of which was, and is still, ornamented by big dragons crawling

weirdly all over it and clinging, apparently most uncertainly, to it, while supporting large glass chandeliers. As a child I was terrified at these, to me, awful monsters, lest one of them should at some moment flop down from the ceiling and run about, like us children, in search of a table with its "dragonish" name pinned upon it, or—worse still—lest one dragon, more hungry than the rest, should *crawl* down, catch *me* up, and make a Christmas meal off me.

Oh! those dear, delightful evenings! If ever I enter that room at the Pavilion even now I scarcely know whether to laugh or cry. I look up at the monsters, and feel sorry that the dream of my childish terror should no longer exist, and whisper low to the fierce-looking dragons: "Ah! you and I are older friends than the people here know!"

On those festive occasions everything went well; and I think the happiest moment of those most happy evenings was when, after a kind embrace from the King and Queen, each pair of children was set free to search for, and find his or her own table. Small round tables, upholstered in white, were dotted about all over the room with

each child's name pinned upon the one dedicated to him or her, and covered with bon-bons and toys of every variety ; no one can conceive the delight and shouting when each child discovered its own property.

Ah ! *ces beaux jours sont passés !*

The old King and Queen and most of their suite and guests are long dead and gone, and the Pavilion itself is no longer a royal palace, but is used for public meetings, flower shows, bazaars and subscription balls. I wonder what the dragons think of the change !

* * * * *

Good King William was not only fond of little children, but he also loved, and was proud of, the English schoolboy, and spending the Christmas, as he often did, in Brighton, he became greatly interested in two large boys' schools situated not far from the Pavilion. One of these schools was "patronised" much by "the nobility," and the other by boys of lower rank, sons of gentlemen. The two schools had been nicknamed "The House of Lords" and "The House of Commons." The King was interested in both, and knew many of the boys and their parents intimately. At times,

perhaps from delicacy of health or from other causes, some of the boys would be condemned to stay at school during the holidays. King William would kindly find out the names of such boys and invite them to spend the afternoon in the Pavilion gardens, and on such occasions he would himself go into the gardens, or into the rooms set aside for the boys to play in, and talk kindly to them, inquiring about their homes, relations, &c. One day, however, the headmaster, for some reason, thought it prudent that a master should be sent with the boys, and when the King found this out he was displeased, and said to the usher :

"English boys are English gentlemen, and, I feel sure, require no supervision when invited to make the acquaintance of their King ! "

After this the unfortunate master " made himself scarce," and the boys enjoyed themselves certainly as well, if not better, without him.

III.

My mother had a house at Brighton in Brunswick Terrace, overlooking the sea, and my love for the

view of the sea was very great. I believe it was from constantly sitting at the window—if I could get it open I liked it more—that I caught a terrible toothache. I remember spending one whole night of agony, and it was thereupon decided that I must have my poor little tooth out. This, to me, was an awful decision, but to take my mind off it I took my usual morning's walk on the Chain Pier. King William was there as usual, and he was much distressed at seeing my red eyes, and asked why I had been crying. With many curtseys, my nurse, Crockett, informed his Majesty what ordeal was threatening me in the afternoon, and he said kindly that if I was a good courageous girl, and did not fret, he would send me two little visitors to have tea with me when I returned from the dentist. My curiosity of course was great. Who could the visitors be? At all events the King's object was attained, for I was so curious about the mysterious visitors that I almost forgot the dentist.

The operation took place—a wee tooth was taken out and seemed to me a mere nothing, I was so anxious to get home. On arriving there what should I see but two beautifully dressed dolls

quietly sitting at the table awaiting my arrival, before a lovely china tea-set! One was in pink, with "Mina" pinned upon her beautiful ball dress, and the other was dubbed "Millicent," my sister's name, and was dressed in blue. Never shall I forget our delight; and a letter was affixed to the pink doll desiring me and my sister Millicent to bring both the young ladies, sitting so gravely at the table, to be presented to their Majesties the following day at the Pavilion. Alas! a most heartbreaking incident occurred. I was so delighted with my new doll that I must needs walk up and down, up and down, with the young lady, and kiss her constantly. I forgot about the dentist and my poor little mouth. I fell with her in my arms. My mouth began to bleed violently, and before I was aware of the catastrophe my poor dolly's pink silk was utterly destroyed and her beautiful arms were smashed. My dear mother was much distressed, and that night, when she was dining at the Pavilion, told her father of the misfortune and of my grief, and he directly sent to the shop and ordered me another doll. It came, but not before I had cried and cried as I had never cried before.

When my Dolly died—when my Dolly died,
I sat on the step, and I cried, and I cried,
And I couldn't eat my jam and bread,
'Cause it didn't seem right, when my doll was dead.
And Bridget was sorry as she could be,
For she patted my head, and "Oh," said she,
"To think that the pretty has gone and died!"
Then I broke out afresh, and I cried, and cried.
We dug her a grave in the violet bed,
And planted violets at her head.
And we raised a stone, and wrote quite plain,
"Here lies a dear Doll, that died of pain."
And then my brother said "Amen,"
And we all went back to the House again.
But all the time, I cried, and cried,
Because 'twas right when my doll had died!
And then we had more jam and bread,
But I didn't eat, 'cause my doll was dead!
And I tied some crape on my doll's house door,
And then I cried, and cried some more.
I couldn't be happy, don't you see?
Because the funeral belonged to me.
And then my friends went home—and then,
I went—and dug up my doll again!

The funniest part of the story, however, remains to be told.

Dear old nurse, Mrs. Crockett, eminently a nurse of the old school, who had nursed and brought up almost every Kennedy that ever was born, used to wear the most impossible "mob-caps," which she manufactured herself on an

article called a "dummy," a thing rather the shape of a skull, upon which we children looked with the greatest reverence. These caps were made of white muslin lined with a colour, and with a poke and a bow at the top.

Crockett felt that, as she would go with us to the Pavilion the next day to present our dolls to the King, *she* would have to be present, and consequently must have a clean cap. So with much admiration, not unmixed with awe, we watched Crockett building up this wonderful erection to wear the following day at the presentation. We saw her try it on with trembling admiration, then suddenly it entered my mind, as we were all going to the Pavilion, that nothing would enhance their beauty so much as to endow each doll with a Crockett cap! We felt sure it would be a unique mark of gratitude to the King, and give him an unexpected pleasure. Crockett was flattered at the idea of her mob being immortalised, and it was done. The presentation ceremony was duly gone through next day with *éclat!*

Whether the "mobs" were much admired I cannot remember; but I was rather in luck, and received a gift from a "grand old gentleman," as

I considered him, whom we saw at the palace, who told me I was a "pretty little miss." He was a foreign prince, and presented me with a long glass bottle—a facsimile of those we were in the habit of seeing when condemned to take castor oil. There was no castor oil, however, in this bottle, but a lovely little carriage carved in wood, with horses, coachman, and footman complete, and the giver's name was Prince Ernest (or Philip, I forget which) of Philipstal. It was lovely! The wheels turned round and were beautifully coloured. I was enchanted, and for days it was a source of delight and wonderment to me as to how the little vehicle ever got into the bottle. I also, from the very first moment, harboured a guilty determination to get it out, a resolve, alas! very soon put into practice; it caused not only the destruction of the glass home and its inmates, but also floods of hopeless tears, because things thus destroyed could no more be replaced "*as they used to was*." How often happy homes are broken up in a moment of mad folly, and how fruitless are the tears then shed!

III

WINDSOR CASTLE

1835–7

Thou who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present ; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire !
Strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

I

It is curious how little I remember of Windsor Castle, although I was often there in my early childhood when good King William reigned. One would have thought that such a dream of beauty as Windsor would have left its impression on even a child's mind. But, as I reiterate, children " take in " certain isolated facts, such as forms and faces, strange voices or sounds, scents, and so forth, which they never forget, and which, unimportant

as they may be, come up to them later in life, presenting themselves mysteriously to the imagination at unexpected and apparently irrelevant moments, while more important things are forgotten. The "fleeting ghosts" these little things are of some memory that stirred their consciousness at the time when they were, according to modern parlance, "too young for anything."

For example, I can see even now, whenever I like, and through the mists in my now aged brain, an old palace in red brick, somewhere, I think, near Kew, if it be not Kew itself. I can see faces there, and old-fashioned flower-beds, which do not certainly exist to-day, and—. But I must pull myself up, or my "havering" will conjure up a stern literary policeman, who will urge me to "move on," and I shall feel inclined to answer, all in my fancy, as I once heard a poor woman do when hard pressed by a persistent "Bobby," "I *'am* movin' hon! I'm allus movin' hon! but *where to?*" Poor woman!

However, that red brick palace was not Windsor, and what I am about to talk about is.

One pleasant memory I have of Windsor is sufficiently interesting. Every morning I and my

brother and sister used to be sent for by King William for us to see his kind cheery face and head washed by his old valet, Jemmett, in a large silver ewer—I am happy to say I possess that ewer at this moment—in the most delicious rose-water.

The ceremony used always to be performed by Jemmett, who had lived with the King for years. A fresh bottle was used each time, being uncorked in the room; the King, whose hair was short and quite white, would place his head over the ewer, a large towel having been tied round his neck, and the sweet water was poured over it, into the ewer, and then a sponging process used to go on for some moments, filling the room with delicious odour. I think, at that moment, I wished I was King; more at that moment than any other. After the ablution, came the drying on a soft towel; then the coat and waistcoat were donned, and with a rosy and sweet-smelling face, the old King, after kissing the small children, would walk into the breakfast-room, and for the time we saw him no more. To this day the scent of rose-water calls up to me that memory of the past.

Many of the King's grandchildren used, by his wish, to be drilled, while others were taught

to dance; and these lessons used to take place at different times in a room in the castle, called the "Octagon Room." The drilling was undertaken by a certain soldier of the name of Winterbottom; and although I can remember his euphonious name, I cannot recall his rank in the Army, nor to what regiment he belonged; but I do remember that we children loved Winterbottom, as did our nursemaids, for once I remember being hastily caught up out of my bath, wrapped in a sheet, and held up all dripping at the window, delighted at the nurse's words: "Come and kiss your hand to Winterbottom, he is passing by with several other soldiers" (all beautiful Winterbottoms, I thought, and all on beautiful horses), and the hero himself seemed delighted at the recognition.

One more memory. I and several of the other children were one day being initiated into the mysteries of dancing by a foreign gentleman, who was giving us the time and tune on a very small violin, called a "kit." We were in the Octagon Room, in the afternoon, and suddenly there seemed as though a violent blow had been dealt to one of the eight doors, bursting it open in a most terrifying

fashion ; and judge of our childish feelings when within the doorway appeared a " black man," blacker than any devil *we* had ever heard of. He had scarcely any clothes on, his dress consisting principally of huge coloured feathers on his head, and a few coloured rags round his waist. He held a spear, and was accompanied by others of the same ilk.

They evidently enjoyed our childish terror, dancing and gesticulating at us as they passed through the room, and it was only later that we were told they were the first Ojibbeway Indians that had ever appeared in England, and had come to do homage to the King. They were amusing themselves *en route* by terrifying us children by their shouts and wild gestures.

One other anecdote about Windsor and I really have done.

One happy day some of us children were commanded to appear at luncheon, and I sadly fear I did not " behave " with due decorum. I was placed by the side of a lady who seemed to me far younger than the rest of the guests ; but I did not know her, and never having learnt what fear or shyness was, I began, as I conceived, to make

myself agreeable, and to put my next-door neighbour at her ease. So I began with much amiability:

"Parlez vous Français, mademoiselle?"

The little lady smiled and bowed, but did not answer, and gave me no further encouragement.

I was not, however, in the habit of being snubbed or silenced; so for a second time I asked:

"Parlez vous Français?"

This time the lady took no notice, so I began to think myself rather injured, but not being inclined to put up with anything in the way of a rebuke, and besides, being unaware I had transgressed in any way, I again, irritating child that I was, repeated the senseless question, and was thereupon rebuked by another lady I did not know, who told me I had no right to address *Her Royal Highness;* and afterwards I was told it was the Princess Victoria whose dignity I had offended.

* * * * *

Many years later, under much sadder circumstances, the late Queen Victoria commanded my presence at Windsor, and the audience was in the Octagon Room. This seemed to me such an irony of circumstances that it quite upset me. In the course of conversation her Majesty, who was

most kind, asked me "whether I knew Windsor Castle?" I very nearly told her Majesty how *very much* I knew of it, but my cheerfulness and courage had failed me from many sorrows, and I let it pass, merely bowing my head.

II

LE ROI EST MORT—VIVE LA REINE!

WELL! *Tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse!* and after the Windsor and the Brighton days had passed by, dear old Railshead again became our home; but it was no longer the happy home it had been. Circumstances had changed; my dear mother married a second time, to Lord Frederick Gordon. My grandparents did not like my mother's marrying again, and Railshead became the scene of squabblings and family bickerings between her and the old lord and lady next door; in fact things became so unpleasant, that after recording them my readers will understand how impossible things had become.

One day the old nurse, Crockett, who was always an Ailsa "detective," came and told me my grandmother wished to see and speak with me,

that she was ill in bed, and I was to come with Crockett to her ladyship at once. I was always terrified at my grandmother, but, of course, I went. When I got into her room I found her in a large four-post bed exactly opposite a picture of a kind-looking gentleman. My grandmother was an old woman with stern features, grey-white hair, and, at that moment, dark angry eyes. She was wearing a close white mob-cap, and called out in a very strong Scotch accent, "Mina, come here."

Thereupon I was hoisted up on the bed by an alarmed-looking Abigail, and made to sit close to the angry-looking pale old lady.

"Where's ye mother?" she said.

"Gone to London," I said, "so beautifully dressed. She looked like a large silver dove."

My grandmother laughed a laugh bad to hear, caught hold of my arm, and whispered in broad Scotch accents, which I cannot write:

"I tell ye she's gone to be married, and didna tell ye! Look there," she went on, pointing to the picture opposite her bed, "*there's* ye father, and he's dead, poor fellow, and I want ye to promise me, ye'll never love this—new man, and never call him 'Father.'"

I was so terrified at my grandmother's gestures that I think I would have promised her anything and everything if only she would let me go. I promised, and she let me go. I am sure, poor old lady, that she felt utterly miserable. But I couldn't then understand.

This incident, however, will show that to go on living at Railshead, next to indignant old Lady Ailsa, was an impossibility, so my mother naturally turned for help to her father. The good King gave her apartments in Kensington Palace, of which she was called "the State housekeeper."

This change of domicile was absolutely necessary, for by the Scotch law of those days my brother (who was heir to Dun House, Lady Ailsa's property in Scotland) could be lawfully taken away from his stepfather. He actually was. One day, to my mother's great distress, the boy disappeared, and she was informed he had been sent to a school by his grandparents. In an agony she asked King William what was to be done?

"Make no fuss," said the old King, "and kidnap the boy back."

And this was exactly what happened later. The

boy came to his mother for the holidays and was "kidnapped back."

* * * * *

One morning when I was about seven years of age, I was awakened by the entrance of my dear mother. It was very early in the morning, and yet I saw that she was fully dressed, as though she had just returned from a journey, and she was crying. She called in the old nurse and said something hastily to her, at the same time desiring her to pull down all the blinds.

I sprang up in my bed. "Mother," I cried, "is anything the matter?"

She came then to me, poor dear, threw herself on my bed, and exclaimed, sobbing:

"Mina! the King is dead. We shall never see his kind face again."

A shock went through me, and, young as I was, I conjured up before me that dear face, the white hair, the indescribable scent of rose-water which always pervaded the room wherever he was, and the kindly voice.

"Oh mama!" I said, "not dead! Then who will take care of us—of England—now?"

"There is a young Queen now," sobbed my poor mother.

"I don't like her!" I said passionately, bursting into tears; "she shan't be *my* queen!" for I had dearly loved the Sailor King.

"Hush!" said my poor weeping mother, "you must not say that, and you must now repeat the words I say, after me. 'God save the Queen!'"

Seeing my dear mother's serious face, and hearing the word "God," I concluded it was a prayer (as, indeed, it is, if people would only remember the fact), so putting my hands reverently together, I repeated the words solemnly. This is all I remember of the Queen's accession.

IV

GIRLHOOD AT KENSINGTON PALACE

1837—1846

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.

I

I REMEMBER well our arrival at Kensington Palace, and the journey from our old home. Of course in those days, there being no railroads, the drive from Railshead to Kensington was quite an undertaking, and a most interesting experience it was to me, for my mother, by the marriage of one of her sisters, was intimate with "the great" Lord Holland, and he, hearing of the prospective change of our home, kindly begged my mother to break the journey by stopping for luncheon and a short rest at beautiful Holland House. That visit to Holland House made a lasting impression upon me, young as I was. The lovely rooms and the pictures, the

beauteous gardens and park, and last, but I am afraid not least, the delicious cold luncheon! To this day I never taste cold turkey and salad without their conjuring up in my mind's eye Holland House dining-room, full of brilliant silver and glass, the smart footmen, and, most of all, a most charming-looking lady with a very pale face—the palest face I think I ever saw, and with such a heavenly, sweet smile. She sat in a large arm-chair, and her occupation seemed to me, even young as I was, *strange* in a dining-room.

She was not sitting at the dining-room table with every one else, but in a corner of the room. A maid was kneeling by her, bathing the pale, sweet, smiling lady's feet—the loveliest white feet—in a large china foot-tub! This lady was the famous Lady Holland, and I heard it said that these, to outsiders, peculiar ablutions invariably took place in the dining-room of Holland House during luncheon, whether there were visitors or not! I never forgot it.

After this we proceeded on our journey to our new home.

* * * * *

The first real event I remember at Kensington

was some time after—the marriage of our "little Queen" Victoria, as she was fondly called for many years, for she was very young and childlike in appearance, very short, and very innocent-looking.

This event of course created the greatest excitement in Kensington—more so than anywhere almost—for the young Queen had been born in the palace there, had lived there for years, and the Kensingtonians dearly loved her. The excitement, therefore, was past words, and when we children were told that on one especial day the young Queen, with a beautiful bridegroom, would pass along the High Street on their way to a lovely castle, where the honeymoon would be spent, to our childish minds it all seemed like a fairy tale. A young Queen, a beautiful bridegroom, an escort of soldiers on horseback, a magnificent castle—and a honeymoon! What this said "honeymoon" was, we did not wait to inquire. We only knew it sounded sweet, bright and generally delicious. We were further told we were to go to a lady's house in the High Street to see the procession, to wave flags and handkerchiefs as the Queen and the beautiful

young Prince and the honeymoon (?) went by. We were to cheer and make as much noise as ever we liked—or could (and we liked and could a great deal !) ; and so we started in high glee, and conscientiously fulfilled the noisy part of the bargain.

I can now see the Queen's sweet and happy face, white roses encircling the inside, as was the fashion then, of her bride-bonnet. There is an old print now which always reminds me, whenever I come across it, of her happy face that day. Well, like everything else, the vision passed. We now prepared to return home thoroughly tired out from the excitement of our emotions ; being also rather quarrelsomely disposed from a painful uncertainty which tortured us as to which of us children had been especially singled out by her Majesty, the bride, and honoured by her particular notice. In fact, the arguments became so hot and so uncivil—("I tell you she *did* nod *at me !*" "She *didn't*, she smiled at me !" "She didn't," &c. &c.) —that, had a most curious and untoward accident not distracted our attention, blows must have ensued. But in this case it proved the truth of the saying that, "It is an ill wind that blows no

Kensington Palace.

one any good," and really, in a small way, what I am about to relate proves the truth of this saying. We were on the point of scratching each other's eyes out (metaphorically, I hope) when a certain lady, unfortunately fat and unwieldy, was seized with a passionate wish to get near the Queen's carriage, and if possible obtain a smile from the royal bride. This lady lived in Kensington Palace with two maiden sisters-in-law, of the name of Wynyard, who had been attached to Queen Charlotte's household. Getting into the High Street in front of the house, in the balcony of which we children were standing shouting and waving flags, Mrs. Wynyard foolishly mixed with the crowd, and directly after the royal carriage had passed she was knocked down by a frightened horse and her leg was broken. Mercifully, just at that moment an old-fashioned dust-cart was seen standing round a corner, and the poor lady was lifted up and placed in a sitting posture within it, and one of her servants, passing by, saw his mistress driven back to her sister-in-law's rooms in the palace—a mode of locomotion more comfortable than dignified. Poor lady! She was lame for years after; indeed, I know not whether she was ever again anything else.

II

We lived many years in Kensington Palace. In fact, it was our home until I and my sister were "wedded and awa," and as I think over the many curious little circumstances that took place during those years, I feel as though I could write volumes. I can hear my kind friends say, "Pray don't," so I will try not to bore them with the short stories I have to tell—at least I will do my best to prevent their wearying overmuch.

Kensington Gardens bring back many memories; but how altered they are to-day! There used to be curious little summer-houses, painted white, dotted all about the walks, and one enormously tall one, which looked towards the palace, called "Queen Anne's summer-house." The little ones no longer exist! I remember also that generally every day, when out walking with our governess, we used to see a funny little wizened old man, very oddly dressed, and invariably wearing a bright red scarf tied round his throat. He seemed never to tire running round and round one particular tree, muttering as he ran, and gazing up at the top boughs. We used to see him there so constantly

that the strange thing was when he was *not* there. I once heard our governess ask a nursery-maid *who he was?* and she answered, in her doubtful English, "Oh *him!* poor old chap! He's a gentleman born, he is, and he went mad with love for 'the little Queen'—Victoria—"and if you listen to his words, he says constantly, as he looks up at the boughs, 'Too high! too high for me!'"

Not long after I heard this story the poor old gentleman disappeared. Probably he had got "higher" still! They said he was harmless, and that the red kerchief was always a safety-mark for his keepers.

* * * * *

Kensington, of course, is full of memories of Queen Victoria. I was told a funny little story about the Queen when she was princess and quite a young girl. She had a clergyman of the name of Dr. Davys as a tutor, and both the princess and the Duchess of Kent were very fond of him. He also had a charming daughter. I knew both father and daughter, and later on the father became Bishop of Peterborough. The little Princess used often to come into the room where Miss Davys wrote her own private letters, and one day, when

she was deeply interested in a letter she was writing, the Princess came behind her. Miss Davys did not know any one was there, and being a little bothered with her letter—not knowing what to write next—she began to swing her eyeglass. She was very short-sighted, and wore the glass on a long chain. So she kept swinging the glass, until suddenly she heard a scream behind her, and received a ringing box on the ear. Much hurt, as well as surprised, she turned and saw the Princess behind her holding her handkerchief up to her eye, while the lady nearly wept from the stinging blow on her face.

Miss Davys was very angry, for she felt that what she had been guilty of was accidental, while the Princess' blow had been given with all her might. So, with a deep curtsey, she ran to her room, put on her bonnet, and went and complained to her father. He very properly insisted on an ample apology, which Princess Victoria tendered, and matters were made straight again.

* * * * *

When I was a child at Kensington, I remember being sent for, and told to come and see "the two Prince Georges." I went into the drawing-

room and found my mother sitting with two young men, who were very courteous and civil. One was bigger and more jolly-looking than the other, who was very handsome, tall, and pale. After they were gone I was told that I had been presented to Prince George of Cambridge (the present Duke) and Prince George of Hanover (the eldest son of King Ernest of Hanover, Duke of Cumberland ; in fact, the Crown Prince of Hanover, afterwards George V.). I never forgot the latter's pale, beautiful face. He was almost blind then, and became quite blind later, from the effects, we were told, of an accident with a bunch of keys, which flew up into his eyes as he was playing with them, and he never saw properly again. Of course I am only repeating what I was told. The two young Princes were on a visit to their uncle, the Duke of Sussex, who had apartments in Kensington Palace, the rooms now occupied by Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll.

* * * * *

At Kensington we had a fat little old Swiss governess, called Mademoiselle de Saules. She was very severe when anything put her out ; and she was, in appearance, of a style that one rarely,

if ever, sees in an Englishwoman. She was very short (when I was twelve years of age I was nearly as tall, if not quite, as she was) ; she had little, short, fat legs, and feet like small canoes, a very round head, very round black lips ; in short, she was round *everywhere !* One day as we were going out for our daily walk in Kensington Gardens, as we were passing under the Clock archway, we met a tall, fine-looking old gentleman, and we knew he must be *somebody* as the sentry presented arms. He was very like the Duke of Sussex, whom I knew well, and to our surprise he stopped us. He looked in an amused way at mademoiselle, and asked us *who we were ?* Mademoiselle curtsied till she almost disappeared, and said we were the Kennedy-Erskine children. Looking full of fun at the agitated governess, he answered, " What ! toutes les 'ducks ?' " meaning, I suppose, *tous les deux*, but he clearly made it self-evident that he meant to mix up the little *foreign duck* as well, and she was mightily pleased. He sent his love to my mother. Mademoiselle was more than ever delighted when I told her it must be the Duke of Cambridge, who, we knew, was on a visit to his brother, the Duke of Sussex. He was the

youngest son of George III. and father of the present duke.

* * * * *

Kensington recalls to me some anecdotes of my uncle, Lord Augustus FitzClarence, who often used to visit us there. He was a clergyman and a most extraordinary character. He did not marry till late in life, and then he married a daughter of Lord Henry Gordon, many years younger than himself, and a very beautiful woman. Uncle Augustus used to wear "leggings," I think they are called, like a bishop, for he had beautifully formed legs, and was very proud of them. He also shaved his head, all except a band round the base of his head. He was also very short-sighted and wore spectacles, a top hat, and a broad band of crape round it. I don't suppose my readers ever knew that such an individual existed, but he *did*, and did the most extraordinary and unclerical things. King William, his father, gave him a lovely little living at Mapledurham, where he always lived after his marriage. He used often, before his marriage, to ride out to Kensington to see us; and one day as he trotted into the court-yard his horse slipped up and

fell. Mercifully my uncle was enabled to throw himself off the horse, and disengage himself from the stirrups. The horse lay prone on the flag-stones. My uncle Adolphus was so surprised at the accident, and still more at his safety (for it was an awkward fall), that to our astonishment (for we children were, of course, looking out of the window), and to the intense amazement of the sentry, who apparently did not know whether to present arms, or to fire, or to take my uncle in charge as a madman, this extraordinary individual was so delighted from his immunity from harm—and broken limbs—that as soon as he was properly free from his horse, he threw himself into an attitude like a *danseuse*, and capered round the court-yard, delighted to find himself unhurt. The horse seemed not a whit surprised, but got up, shook himself, and trotted up to his master, then stood quietly while my uncle tied him up to the palace railings.

Another time this singular uncle of mine went on a journey by rail with a great friend of his, Mr. A. M. I think they were going to my uncle's living at Mapledurham, and he and his friend, who wanted a private conversation, were greatly

bothered at the presence in the carriage of an old lady and her maid, and they were determined, if possible, to get the old lady to go into another carriage. So at a sign from my uncle to his friend Mr. A. M., they agreed to act the parts of an idiotic individual being taken by his keeper to his home. My uncle made odd noises, talked incoherently to the lady, danced about in the carriage, and did all he knew to intimidate her. But she took not the slightest notice. After having paused at one or two stations, the train stopped at the old lady's destination, and she and her maid got up to go. But before she left the carriage she turned to my uncle and said calmly, "Lord Augustus FitzClarence, you thought to alarm me, in a most unmanly, ungentlemanlike way, and get rid of my presence; but I knew you and your silly ways, and was determined to let *you* know that you had reckoned this time without your host. You have only shown yourself a most unworthy son of the most clever and delightful comic actress—whom I knew and respected."

I know not what my uncle's answer may have been. I only know he used to tell the story

against himself, for he had loved and mourned his mother.

One more story about him.

"A day came along," as our American cousins say, when the great Marshal Soult came to England. Marshal Soult was born in 1769, the same year which gave birth to Arthur Wellington and Napoleon Bonaparte. He served in the army in 1794 and 1795. He took part in the campaign of Germany till 1799, when he followed Masséna into Switzerland and Genoa. In the latter place he was wounded and taken prisoner. After the battle of Marengo he was set at liberty and raised to the command of Piedmont, and returned to France at the Peace of Amiens in 1802. The Empire created Soult Marshal of France in 1804, and he held the command of the Fourth Corps at Austerlitz. In all German battles he took a prominent part, and in 1808 he entered Spain, and falling on Sir J. Moore's division, caused the Corunna defeat; but he was repulsed with loss when the English turned to bay below the walls. By the fine old fellow's orders, however, the French soldiers fired minute guns over the grave of Sir John Moore, and he caused a record of

the brave English general's death to be carved on a rock near the spot on which his respected enemy fell. Soult served as quartermaster-general at Waterloo, and then took refuge at Malzieu with his former aide-de-camp. For a while he lived with his family at St. Amand and rested. Afterwards Charles X. treated him with much favour, creating him a peer of France.

In 1838, on the coronation of Queen Victoria, Soult was nominated ambassador extraordinary to represent France at the ceremonial. He was greatly *fêted* by the Duke of Wellington, who thought much of him. My last story of my Uncle Augustus took place at the time of Marshal Soult's visit.

The Duke of Sussex gave a great *fête* at Kensington Palace in his honour. Wonderful preparations had been made *outside* the palace as well as in, in the way of decorations. I was then eight years of age and deeply interested in what was going forward ; and, needless to say, in constant danger of falling head-foremost on to the ground from the window ; and I am not sure that I did not hope I might have the good luck of falling into Marshal Soult's or the Duke of Wellington's

arms ! This event, however, did *not* take place ; but in the midst of all the excitement a lady walked into my mother's apartments—one whom my mother did not know—bringing with her a baby in a nurse's arms, and a bumptious little boy, who walked up and said :

" I am Douglas Parkyns ! "

The lady, seeing luncheon prepared for other and invited guests—for my mother had a little party for the occasion—now apologised and told her story. She said, amid much agitation, that she had been insulted by " a gentleman," and had run in to my mother for protection. At the moment when Marshal Soult and the Duke of Wellington were arriving, a "most extraordinary man," who had been standing and staring at her for some time—she was good-looking, but of a cockney type—suddenly caught up Douglas (the bumptious boy), and handed him over to an officer, whom he seemed to know ; then, seizing the nurse and the baby, he put them by the side of another officer, and, turning to the astonished mother, said :

" And now *I* can talk to *you !* "

The lady's pronunciation was most cockney with her " ows " and " O Lors ! "

"Was he a gentleman?" my mother asked.

"O Lor! he looked like a bishop!"

Then my mother's heart failed her, and she guessed. In another moment the door of the room burst open.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Parkyns, "if here isn't the very man!"

My mother came forward directly and said:

"This is my brother, Mrs. Parkyns. I am sure he *meant* no rudeness; but he loves children, and wanted them to see the horses and soldiers."

So Mrs. Parkyns, now all smiles, bowed and sat down, had a good luncheon, and became good friends with my erratic uncle. The two probably never met again; at least I never heard of their doing so.

III

Another memory comes to me of Kensington, and one which proves, not, I fear, for the first time, that what are considered "days of discretion" often turn out to be "days of indiscretion!" I and my sister were undoubtedly music-mad. We not only loved music, but we used to conceive romantic admirations for the musicians. Mercifully,

female musicians were our fancy, and not the male ones. I and my sister had the most devoted and wild *engouement* for a certain famous lady singer, whose contralto voice was better than anything I heard at that time—or since. Her name was Marietta Alboni. Well, there would have been no harm and little folly in this admiration had it not been for the deceit we practised on my mother, who was the most trusting of women, and had it not been for my Italian singing-master, who certainly betrayed the confidence reposed in him, showing a lack of honour and good faith which, had we girls been a few years older, might have had troublesome results. I chanced, even in those days, young as I was, to be, in my humble way, a singer and even a composer. Of course this was thought a great deal of in a girl of fifteen. At that age, too, we were no longer children, watched by nurses and nursery-maids, but we had governesses, who were not as well educated as those of to-day. They did not comprehend French or Italian, whereas we girls were quick at languages, both from having teachers and also because we had been a good deal abroad. The upshot was, that our Italian singing-master, who was acquainted with the charming

singer Alboni, had repeated to her the expressions of our wild admiration for her, and even in the presence of our governess messages in Italian had passed between us and the *diva*, so that from one step to another our silly infatuation grew and grew till our master very wrongly offered to effect a meeting between us and Madame Alboni some day in Kensington Gardens, where it might be managed without fear of discovery. So one summer afternoon, at about 5.30 P.M., I and my sister sallied forth, timid, but very happy, to an unfrequented part of the gardens at the back of the palace, and there we stood and waited. I think during that waiting our hearts rather failed us, and we became rather alarmed at what we were doing; but at last our diva appeared, and oh! when she appeared, how disillusioned at once we became. She was fat and clumsy, and came waddling up, accompanied by a dreadful-looking foreign man, who, after settling her on a seat, went and ensconced himself on another hard by, to our great annoyance, for it was evident he was watching us vigilantly.

We felt, however, we had got into the scrape and must go through with it. So tremblingly we approached the lady, and we were by no means

pleased by our reception. She began by questioning us very closely about ourselves, our mother, and our relations in general, and when, in the course of conversation, I told her quite naturally that our mother was "State housekeeper of Kensington Palace," the murder was out, and she let us see at once that as we were the daughters of "a housekeeper" she supposed we were not ladies! So she very soon ended the interview and left Kensington Gardens, and we never had any further conversation with her. But oh! the beauty of her voice! Years afterwards I heard her sing in Paris —that was the last time; "and the voice in my 'dreaming ear' then melted away" for ever.

* * * * *

About this time (I cannot remember dates) my stepfather, Lord Frederick Gordon, insisted on our having a little old dancing-master of the name of Jenkins. It was absurd, for Jenkins was eighty years of age. But he was as active as a young man. He had taught all my stepfather's family to dance, and was a thin, upright, wiry old man with grey hair; and when I or my sister were extra stupid at any step, it was wonderful to see him dancing about to show us how it ought to be

done, playing his fiddle all the time. I don't know why, but I did not like him. I thought it incongruous and undignified for an old man to caper and kick about. The fact of its being, perhaps, a hard and sad necessity never entered my youthful mind.

We used to take our dancing-lessons in the dining-room at Kensington, where there was an old oak sideboard with a large mirror. One day, in the excitement of the dance, I forgot my good manners, and was a very naughty little girl. While the old dancing-master was teaching me the intricacies of the minuet he turned his back on me, and performed a *révérence*, most conscientiously, in order to teach me better. I made the *révérence* also, but, forgetting the mirror, I accompanied it by a fearful grimace, but, before it was done, to my horror I caught the old man's eye looking at me in the mirror. I thought I should have fainted. He turned quickly round and said to me, "Young lady, I am a *very* old man now; but I can safely say I never saw so hideous, so repulsive, a face *as yours*. However, I will forgive it from my heart if you will do me the pleasure of perpetrating it over again!" And there I was trying

to make the same face, forgetting which it was, he going on repeating, "No, not that one! *try another!*" till I nearly died of shame. It taught me a lesson: to be considerate of the feelings of others.

My stepfather told me that the old dancing-master had seen and spoken to Marie Antoinette. If I had known that before, I should have shown him greater respect, for I had a deep feeling of reverence for the poor Queen. My stepfather's father, the old Lord Huntley, once told me that *he* had danced with Marie Antoinette, which interested me intensely. She was the heroine of my youth, and even to-day she holds her place in my heart as the most beautiful and unfortunate of Queens.

IV

Every one who is acquainted with Kensington Palace knows that there are two courts belonging to it—the outer and the inner court; also that there are sentries on duty in the *outer* court all day and all night long; that they are relieved every two hours only, unless the sentries make a

signal intimating that they require relief for some unforeseen reason. The sentries in the *inner* court used only to be on duty at night, for twelve hours, beginning at eight o'clock P.M., they being subject to the same rule—signalling should they require relief.

One day my mother, who held a responsible position in the palace, and was therefore told all that passed, was much astonished by being informed that, for the future, there would be no night sentries in the inner court. She was naturally surprised, and asked the reason of the change? Whereupon she was told the following strange story:

A night or two before, the sentry had been placed as usual in the inner court, and at about 1.30 P.M. a signal was perceived coming from him, from which it was inferred that for some reason he required aid. A relieving sergeant and two sentries were despatched at once, and on their arrival the soldier on duty was found on the ground speechless—in a fit. When he recovered, he stated that as one o'clock struck he saw a man's figure approaching along the dimly-lit passage, which was his (the sentry's) beat. The "figure,"

the soldier said, was strangely dressed, and presented such an extraordinary appearance that he was too alarmed to notice anything very definite as to its dress. All he really noticed was that the stranger never answered his challenge ; indeed, he seemed to take no notice of it, or of him, but glided noiselessly by. As soon as the figure had disappeared the soldier fell down in a dead faint. When questioned he had no hesitation in saying he had come across something supernatural, and was so alarmed that he declared he "had rather go through anything in the world than stay in that passage any longer alone."

Whether another sentry was made to take that one's place that same night or not I never heard, but we *did* hear that the poor man was unmercifully "chaffed" and "ballyragged" by his comrades the next morning. One young soldier, with much bravado, begged that *he* might be placed on night duty as sentry in the inner court, and added that no "figure," be it that of man or devil, should pass *him* without giving him the watchword ; that he would challenge the comer, and if he did not answer him satisfactorily he would either fire on him or pin him to the wall with his bayonet.

Night arrived, and the young soldier was placed in the inner court. No signs of distress issued thence; but when the time came for him to be relieved, he, too, was found in a fit on the ground with his bayonet broken! As soon as he came to himself he volunteered the following statement:

Everything went on as usual on the beat till one o'clock struck; then he saw a figure coming towards him from the further end of the passage. He waited till the figure came within about twenty yards of him, so that he was able to notice that the stranger's dress was unlike anything he had ever seen—long and loose. The sentry challenged the intruder, but got no answer, the figure still slowly advancing. The soldier could not see the stranger's face, and when he was quite close he challenged him loudly, adding: "If you don't give me the pass-word, I fire!" The figure gave no answer, but continued slowly advancing as though it heard nothing. It now made as though it would pass the indignant sentry, and it *did pass him!* for the soldier thrust at it with his bayonet, but it glided calmly by, and *the bayonet passed through it into the wall, making a deep mark and shivering to splinters!*

I tell the story as it was told to my mother, who saw the mark on the wall.

This second incident caused the greatest excitement among the guard, and the soldiers positively refused to do sentry duty again in the inner court.

Lord Cardigan was sent for, as being a strict officer whom few men dared to gainsay or contradict in military matters. He came and dined with my mother the same day the matter was being investigated, but he would say nothing—was evidently not to be "pumped."

We heard afterwards, however, in spite of Lord Cardigan's overbearing disposition, and his well-known influence with soldiers, high and low, that he found himself quite unable to alter the animus he found amongst them. Certainly I can vouch for it that no sentries were ever afterwards—at all events during the time that *I* was living at Kensington—placed in the inner court of the Palace. Things may be changed now.

The rumour was that the apparition was that of George II., who died suddenly at Kensington Palace, October 25, 1760, under circumstances that could not be made public in detail.

V

A CURIOUS EXPERIENCE

Tout comprendre—c'est tout pardonner.

BEFORE my childhood had hardly passed a singular and painful experience visited our home at Kensington. There was a beautiful lady, whose name I need not give, whom my mother had been intimate with for years ; in fact, she had belonged to the Court, and was much disliked by one half of it, but loved by the other. My dear mother always loved her, and stuck to her " through thick and thin " as long as she could. This lady was one of the most beautiful women I ever saw, and she made a great marriage, marrying a rich old peer with a lovely place. My stepfather disliked her excessively, and it was much against his will that whenever he went on business to Scotland (which he had to do for some weeks every year),

my mother insisted on having her friend to stay with her at Kensington.

The visit of which I am about to speak turned out to be a most disastrous one.

I remember that one day before luncheon I was sitting with my mother in the drawing-room after lessons when the post came in, and something occurred which I then hardly understood, for I was only about twelve years of age. A letter was brought in by the footman and handed to Lady ——, upon which she laughed, and said to my mother :

"Look here, Ta!" (a pet name). "Does your husband trust you as mine does *me?*" Then she said to me, "Hand this to your mother, Mina."

I did so, and my mother exclaimed :

"A blank cheque! Oh Emily, take care of it!"

Lady —— laughed again, and put it in a bag by her side.

My mother used to go out driving every afternoon with Lady ——, whose passion seemed to be to go to the Soho Bazaar (which I believe does not exist now) and buy pretty little birds of all kinds and colours, whatever the expense, and bring them

home in small cages and take them up to her bedroom. One day the housemaid, who had been twenty years with us, came and complained to my mother that she could not keep Lady ——'s room clean, with all the birds. My mother was angry, for she felt it very awkward to speak of such a thing to a visitor, and it ended by the housemaid saying that if Lady —— stayed *she woulan't !*

My mother was greatly annoyed, but thinking that her visitor would not stay much longer, she left matters as they were ; until one evening she was thoroughly bewildered and *boulversée.* We had a large dinner-party, and as most of our family were coming, all of them being fond of Lady ——, we children, as a great treat, were allowed to come in after dinner. The party consisted of Lord and Lady Erroll, my mother's eldest sister, Lady Mary and General Fox, Lord Augustus FitzClarence, and a few others. The dinner went off most satisfactorily, but unfortunately after dinner Lady Mary Fox, who, as well as my mother, had a great love of curios, called out to my mother (I remember quite well hearing her say it) :

"Ta, you used to have some lovely silver and enamel boxes and miniatures. *Where are they ?*"

My mother answered : " They are all in those glass cases you are looking at."

" But I can't find them," answered my aunt.

My mother said, " Oh ! I'll get them," and she went to the cases in question, but the things were nowhere to be seen. Much perturbed, my mother searched and searched.

At last she sent for the trusty but hostile housemaid, Jane, who came in looking daggers.

" Where are you going to, Emily ? " called my mother to Lady ——, who was hastily leaving the room.

" I am not very well, Ta, dear."

" My lady, *I* know where the boxes are," said Jane loudly.

My mother, seeing something disagreeable was on the *tapis*, said to the housemaid :

"Come into my room." Then and there Lady —— came to my mother, and before seeing Jane, said :

" Ta, I know where they are."

" I should think you did," said Jane furiously, " for you it was who stole them ! "

" No ! It was you who stole them, and put them into my bag—in my room," said Lady ——.

Then a most vulgar scrimmage took place. But Jane was not to be outdone. She brought the boxes, all cut and broken, and scarcely recognisable, and after delivering them to my poor frightened mother, "popped on" her bonnet.

In those days a scurrilous publication called the *Satirist*, was in vogue, coming out weekly, and the next morning the whole story was related in full, names and all.

"It would have ruined *me*," said the maid, "but *she* is well known. It will do *her* no harm; people know *her* already."

All my poor mother's guests hurried off and left her in her trouble—a thing she never forgave. She sent at once for her husband from Scotland. Meantime Lady —— insisted on telling *her* story to my mother, who could not, would not, listen; for she found all the poor little birds *drowned* and *laid out* on newspapers in Lady ——'s bedroom. Jane declared she had gone in one morning, on hearing a curious stir in the bedroom, and found Lady —— holding the poor little birds head downwards in her jug. And the object? Ah! the object!

When my stepfather, Lord Frederick, came back

his one idea was to avoid a scandal, so, as Lady —— had only a few days longer to stay, he said, much against my mother's will, "Let her stay"; and Lady —— put a bold face on it, and determined to stay. But it presently came out that a number of my mother's jewels had disappeared, and as Lady —— was always fond of looking at them and had the run of my mother's drawers, no one could doubt what had become of the missing articles. So Lord Frederick insisted upon a lawyer being called in, upon which Lady —— left the house at once, and I never saw her again.

My mother was miserable, for she had loved the woman, and had Lady —— not made an enemy of Jane there need not have been such an *esclandre.*

The lawyer made my mother promise not to see Lady ——, or Lord ——, or any of that family without witnesses. But one day the footman came up to say "Lord —— was very anxious" to see my mother, "and that he was"——

Before he could say more the poor old husband was *on his knees* by my mother's side. He implored to be allowed a word with her, and he

brought a large dressing-box. He was weeping bitterly, and seemed in such distress that my mother gave in of course, and was shut up alone with Lord ——. He could hardly speak for sobbing, and said he had brought his wife's dressing-case, and my mother was to keep any jewels she found therein that were hers. She told him that she would not look at them then, that he must leave the box and the key, and that she would write. "But," he added, "you have also a letter of mine" (she had) "in which I confess my wife's guilt; will you give me back that letter?"

Will it be believed? but my mother *did so!* She said afterwards he was in great distress, and, being an old man, it broke her heart to see him cry, and she felt she never cared to see a jewel again.

She gave him up the letter, and he instantly threw it into the fire. He, however, left the dressing-case. When the lawyer came and heard what my mother had done, he nearly threw up the case he was so angry.

"You can't prove these jewels are yours," he said.

But my mother knew better, for luckily they all had cases into which they fitted, and so far she was safe. But ever after she hated the sight of the jewels, and I don't know that she ever wore them again.

VI

QUEEN ADELAIDE AND MARLBOROUGH HOUSE

In my young days good Queen Adelaide (then the Queen-dowager) lived at Marlborough House, and my mother often used to take us children there to see her. She was always, as I have said elsewhere, most kind and affectionate, and we much enjoyed going to see her. I remember that she had a beautiful cockatoo, it was grey in colour, mixed with deep pink, and when it became excited it threw up a crest of pink feathers which filled me with the greatest admiration. This parrot had an interesting history. No one, however, not even the oldest of the old King's servants, could tell it satisfactorily. One old man-servant declared that the bird had been known to imitate Queen Anne's voice *exactly*, but which of these ancient retainers could vouch for the truth of the

likeness to the said royal lady's voice I am unable to state. I only tell the tale as it was told to me. The end of the story, however, is that when good Queen Adelaide died the bird was given to my mother, and lived with her for years at Kensington.

I remember that Queen Adelaide gave a garden-party at Marlborough House, called then a "breakfast" for no earthly reason, for the entertainment began about 3 o'clock, and went on sometimes till quite late in the evening. Queen Victoria came on that occasion with the Prince Consort and their eldest child, the Princess Royal, then a sweet little person of about three years old. She was very small, but walked with some dignity by the side of the Queen, her mother, who, with her peculiar grace, was bowing to the right and left as she proceeded between a living hedge of smart ladies and bowing gentlemen, who eagerly looked out for a kindly recognition from the youthful Sovereign. Suddenly the lively baby princess either saw some face she recognised, or something which she wished to investigate more closely, so disengaging herself quickly from the maternal guidance, and without giving due notice, she darted into the midst of the delighted crowd and dis-

appeared. For a moment only however, for she was quickly caught and extricated by her royal mother amid some perturbation.

One more circumstance I recall as regards Marlborough House and the kind Queen-dowager. I and my sister were not yet "out"—had not been presented—but we were "commanded" with our mother to an evening party at Marlborough House to have the honour of meeting her Majesty and the Prince Consort, the party being organised in order that Herr Thalberg should perform on the pianoforte before the royal pair. I remember that I disliked Thalberg's playing excessively. It always gave me the idea as though he were pummelling the poor pianoforte with his fists. The Prince, however, was a great admirer of Thalberg, and I remember that, as the performer was in the midst of one of his *tours de force*, the Prince quite unexpectedly got up from Queen Victoria's side, and placed himself on a chair directly behind the performer, so as the better to watch his hands as he kept pounding away upon the defenceless instrument—without taking any notice of his royal admirer.

At one moment the Prince Consort seemed so

astonished and even "flabbergasted" at the marvellous execution of the performer (one might have thought it would have been the execution of the poor instrument also!) that he made a sign across the room to the Queen, who rose, and to the bewilderment, and, one would think to the annoyance, of the whole company, placed herself by the side of her husband.

Considering the rank of the promenading parties and the foolish but necessary etiquette necessitated by such a curious and unexpected manœuvre, the *grand monde* present, seated round, could do but one thing—namely, get up also, and stand till such time as the Queen should reseat herself.

I remember everybody said, "How sweetly, how gracefully the Queen did it." I can see her now, walking across the room on tip-toe, with her finger on her lips; and in my girlish folly I wondered how Mr. Thalberg, who stopped thumping the piano and bowed, liked the interruption. I comforted myself by remembering that the poor piano had had an unexpected rest, for I half believed instruments had feelings, and I am not sure I don't think so now.

VII

DRESDEN AND MY DREAM*

1847

I had a dream which was not all a dream.

BYRON.

IN the year 1847, we—*i.e.*, my mother, my step-father, my younger sister and myself—all went to Dresden, my mother being anxious that her children should learn to speak German, a language with which, of course, from her childhood she had been familiar. I was then between sixteen and seventeen and not "out"; in fact, we two girls were travelling to learn languages and "finish our edution." I can only say here, *par parenthèse*, that if any of my readers wish to learn the German language, the Saxon German is the ugliest in the way of accent it is possible to come across.

* The story which follows is perfectly true.—W. M.

However, this is, as old folks say, neither here nor there, and people must judge for themselves.

We lived in Dresden at the Hotel de l'Europe in the Alt Markt, an hotel which I am told exists no longer. We occupied all the first floor, and my sister and I slept together in a room at the back of, or rather in the centre of the back of, the hotel, which was built around a courtyard. An awkward incident occurred to me one night. Just as I was falling off to sleep I heard a sound under my pillow, and putting my hand underneath to discover the intruder, I drew out a lizard. Not relishing such a companion I opened the window, intending to throw it out. In the action, however, its tail came off in my hand.

Our sitting-room (we were much offended if it was called a schoolroom, although we had masters and mistresses every day) had windows which opened on the market-place, whence we used to watch the male and female country people in their costumes, who had tramped miles and miles, carrying thither all kinds of commodities—and incommodities, too, one would imagine, as one day we saw a peasant woman carrying a dead bear in her *chiffonnier* basket on her

back, while her husband walked, quietly smoking, by her side.

The articles for sale in the market were not always very pleasing to the olfactory organs, for *sauerkraut*, in dirty pails, and *roe-deer fleish* were there ; mercifully, both articles were very popular among the peasants and were soon sold out.

One night I had a dream. I did not remember the next morning, nor could I ever remember afterwards what I dreamt. I could only bring to mind vividly *a man's face*, and, do what I would, I could not forget it !

When I rose from my bed in the morning, my sister (we were most tenderly attached) remarked that I looked very pale, and asked, was I ill ? I answered " No, but I have had a bad dream."

" What did you dream about ? " she asked.

" I don't know, but I can only remember a man's face."

" What was it like to frighten you so ? "

" Well, it was a man's face, a nasty, wicked, malicious face."

" But bless me, who was it like ? Come, tell me, darling ; and what did you dream about it ? "

"I can't recollect," I answered, and I began to cry.

"Oh," quoth my sister impatiently, "what a dull, stupid, uninteresting dream."

Nothing more was said then, and the day's avocations put the evil face out of my head for the time. But that night, and two or three other nights, I dreamt again and again of the man's face, and told my sister so.

* * * * *

I always remember with delight our drive through the town of Prague, some weeks after leaving Dresden.

The sun was setting scarlet over the old bridge, and the still older river Elbe, and the sight was "beautiful exceedingly."

Our sudden and unexpected appearance at the moment, in an open and very foreign-looking carriage, with my mother, who was a very lovely woman, and my pretty sister inside, my step-father and myself on the box-seat, and the post-boys—one boy to three horses—vigorously blowing their horns, Ferdinand and Louise, our courier and maid, in the *fourgon* bringing up the rear, created quite a commotion in the town. The

inhabitants of Prague seemed as amused at our appearance as we were at theirs.

Our next stay was at Salzburg, and there we enjoyed the delightful experience of going down a salt mine.

It was not an everyday amusement. My sister and I were young, and had, luckily, no sense of bodily fear, so we did not shudder at the sight of a broad balustrade which seemed to shelve down into black depths below, especially as we had a touch of love of the romantic. We were delivered over to the tender care of two very good-looking young miners, who wrapped us up carefully in two very loose, large garments, and made us lie flat on our backs on the balustrade. They then placed themselves in front, also in a lying posture, and we slid down at a terrific pace.

After some moments of pleasurable terror we suddenly arrived, with a bump, into the depths of the earth. But oh! the surprise. It was not dark and black, as we expected, but we found ourselves in the centre, apparently, of a lovely hall, illuminated with every conceivable colour. I never saw such a sight before or since. I know not why, but we were not allowed to stay

long, and were soon hurried away ; perhaps because our parents had not come with us, they, I suppose, having dreaded the means of locomotion. The whole thing was like a beautiful dream, and with regret we bade our young miners farewell.

Both my sister and myself would have loved to linger longer at beautiful Salzburg, and to have explored more thoroughly the salt mines and other sights. But we were told that we must proceed on our journey, and get to Italy as soon as possible. It was settled we were to go by the Stelvio Pass. Oh, the lovely Stelvio! One positively hates the railways when one thinks what they have lost of beauty and charm. There were few, if any, railroads in those days, so we travelled in our own carriage, accompanied by a *fourgon* for the luggage, in which vehicle our servants were installed in great comfort. We crossed the beautiful Stelvio in perfect weather. I shall never forget the excitement of the whole party when one of the postillions turned round and shouted to us, "Ecco la bella Italia," pointing with his horn to a twisted green path. It was our first glimpse of that classic land. I think he was as excited as I was, when he saw me scramble from the box-seat into the

carriage, and promptly get out my guitar, while my mother got out hers, and we essayed to express our joy in music, which was, however, somewhat marred by an accompaniment of the postillion's horn.

We passed several lovely spots which I can't remember now except their names, Meran, Botzen, and Brixen. . . . We stayed a month at Florence, and I was not happy there. I was ill, and I think I had got tired of being always "on the go."

Florence, of course, is beautiful, but I am a thorough John Bull, and I got tired of the never-changing blue sky. I longed for an English "grey day," but never to see a single cloud—not even the flowers could compensate for the loss.

One day Lord Frederick, who became rather provoked with me for this reason and determined I should have something to grumble about, played a practical joke upon me—which did me no good. Putting on his hat one morning, and looking back as he left the room, he desired me to order luncheon, saying that the hotel *chef* was famous for his *fricassée de poulet*, and that I was to order one. I did so, and when the luncheon arrived and my stepfather returned we began the meal. I confess I did not

care much for the *fricassée*, but to please my stepfather I partook of it. If he had left the matter afterwards as it was I should probably have remained innocent of the trick, and perhaps not have suffered as much as I undoubtedly did after! But to my unspeakable horror, as the table was cleared and we were alone, my stepfather calmly asked me "How I liked the chicken?" and then cruelly told me I had been eating a *fricassée* of frog!

Really, without affectation, I was quite ill and in my bed for hours, living for days afterwards on figs and melons. I don't think I have ever been able to look a chicken in the face since; certainly not as *en fricassée*. And also, foolishly no doubt, I took a disgust for Florence.

After some difficulties and disputations it was settled that we were to go to Naples by sea, *via* Leghorn and Civita Vecchia. Rome was tabooed, alas and alas! for I am an old woman now and have *never seen Rome and never shall*, and all in consequence of the Scotch obstinacy of an obstinate Scotchman, who, however, thought he was doing his duties to his "girlies." He had a sort of superstitious feeling that if once we got within

hail of the Pope and his cardinals, we should certainly, one of us girls and *perhaps both*, be left behind as nuns, or at all events as Sisters of Mercy, or else marry Italians. I think the poor old man thought that even the Pope himself would not be safe from two pretty English girls' fascinations, especially as we had had a sort of *warning* in my dream of the man's face. Anyhow, to Rome he would not go, and so on to Naples we went.

The sea journey thither from Leghorn was not very pleasant, for we had a terribly rough passage, my mother, my sister and myself being quite prostrate from *mal de mer*. Ferdinand, our French courier, not being of a very courageous nature, was too terrified at the stormy ocean to be affected in any other way, and also another seeming danger threatened him during this voyage, which I will narrate. Travelling in the same vessel with us we observed a curiously morose-looking woman, young, with very black eyes and heavy brows, and who, whenever she encountered Ferdinand on the deck, grinned at him, but not angrily, showing very fierce, white teeth.

Two determined-looking females were ever at her side, treating her with great firmness, but also

with profound respect. She had also two male attendants.

Of course we were dying of curiosity to know all about the unfortunate lady, and set Ferdinand to find out what he could about her.

After he *had* done this, however, we noticed that he gave her a very wide berth, and that apparently he was much frightened, for the lady seemed to have taken a great fancy to the poor trembling man.

After much tumbling and tossing we arrived at Civita Vecchia. My sister and I and our maid were allowed to land for an hour or two at a small hotel, more dead than alive from sea-sickness. We had been so ill that we were put into a small bedroom, where we could have a bath and other comforts. To add to our interest the poor mad lady was allowed to land also, and sat by me in the boat. It was a very short row, and she was quite quiet, but seemed to be looking about evidently for Ferdinand. When we landed and got into our bedroom to refresh ourselves, we at once attacked Louise, our maid, and begged her to tell us all she had heard about the savage young lady.

"Hush!" said Louise, "or she will hear what you say. Listen to the poor girl's ravings, for she has been placed, with her women, in the next room to you."

We listened, and we heard her say over and over again, "Emmenez-moi chez la Princesse; emmenez-moi chez la Princesse. Où sont les enfants? Monsieur me conduira."

She spoke, in a half-broken voice, over and over again the same words. It touched me extremely, and I said, "Could nothing be done?" But Louise told me that nothing could be done by us, for she was a great *incognita* lady, and she was being sent to Naples to her own medical attendant; that she had taken a great fancy to Ferdinand because he was a Frenchman, but that he showed great hesitation—I am afraid I called it by another name, beginning with a C—but that he need have no fear as she had four attendants.

It was now time for us to return to the boat on our way to Naples, so we paid our bill and started in the same rowing boat with the poor lady. Directly we got on board the ship the lady seized hold of Ferdinand and begged him to walk up and down the deck with her,

which he did, looking the very picture of misery and terror.

When we arrived in the Bay of Naples we were so excited at the loveliness of the place, at the first view of Vesuvius, &c., that everything else went out of our minds. We understood that the poor lady was met by officials and servants, that there had been a fear of some excitement, but we heard no more.

* * * * *

We landed at last and entered again our well-worn yellow English *barouche*. Four *très-Anglais*-looking people with the black heavy *fourgon* coming on behind, containing a French courier and a French maid !

The postillions were noisy, as they consider becomes them, with their horns, while the poor staggering horses, terrified at the cracking of the cruel whips, slipped dangerously over the large square flag-stones, of which most of the Italian cities' streets are composed—like tombstones they always seemed to me.

So we entered Naples and drove along the road to the Grand Hotel. After a wash, a little food, and a rest on the balcony—oh ! how lovely we

found Naples was ! Could any one be ill or cross *there?* The stars were just appearing, the moon was smiling on us, and across the sea, which is ever of a deep *aqua-marina* blue, we received Vesuvius' greeting as though he (or she?) were throwing up balls of fire every five or ten minutes to greet us.

We stayed some weeks at the hotel, and then took apartments at 127 Chiaja (called by the Italians the " Casa Corby," it having been bought by an English lady of the name of Corby).

One afternoon as I was sitting working on the balcony of the Casa Corby, I beheld the greatest novelty I had yet seen at Naples—an English four-in-hand ! It was coming at a great pace towards our house, and my sister, chancing at that moment to have gone for some reason into the drawing-room, I called out to her hastily, " Make haste, dear, or it will have gone by, and you won't have seen it."

" Seen what ? " she answered from within.

" A four-in-hand ! do come."

She dashed on to the balcony, and we both stood eagerly watching, as the vehicle went clattering by.

As we leant over the balcony, the driver,

evidently a gentleman, leant forward in a marked manner, and looked steadily at us.

"What a horrible face!" exclaimed my sister; and as she spoke she turned round to me.

"Darling," she said tenderly, "what is the matter?"

I had all but fainted, and a cold, sick shudder came over me.

"Oh Millicent!" I ejaculated, "that is *the man's face* in my dream!"

I was so frightened that we both left the balcony, and for the rest of the day I was cold, and deadly sick. I did not, however, dream of the face that night, nor did I see it again in Naples, although I sat every day on the balcony, conscious of a shrinking fascination, in the thought that I *might* do so.

After stopping some months in Naples we went to Paris, where (being by that time seventeen years of age) I was permitted to mix a little in society.

Amongst the English residents in Paris, who were very hospitable, were Mr. and Mrs. Tudor, who were very rich and kindly, and even now the memory of their hospitalities is kept green in the French capital.

One night they gave a ball, and as I was standing by my mother, waiting eagerly for my partner to appear from amid the crowd, I saw, at the other end of the room, *the face* which had so strangely haunted me for so long. The eyes were watching me, and the man approached me, as though *I* were his one aim and object. I felt faint and very cold, and I saw our host coming towards me. "The Duca di T——o is anxious to know you."

I scarcely had the presence of mind to bow. I heard the man say something about a dance, and I turned to my mother. "Mama, take me away. I am ill."

I could not walk unassisted out of the room, but Mr. Tudor gave me his arm, and as we were waiting for the carriage I saw the man looking at me with evident amusement, and I heard Mr. Tudor tell my mother that it was "a pity I would not dance with the Duke; that he was the head of one of the oldest Italian families; had been most struck with me and was anxious to obtain an English wife!"

But I never saw the man again, either in dreamland or in everyday life. We were told,

however, that he started for England the next day, and soon after we heard of his death. He was succeeded by his son, who also eventually developed a wish for, and obtained, a beautiful English wife, whom he treated, we heard, with but scant kindness.

VIII

BELLA NAPOLI

1847

Passions are likened to floods and streams:
The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb.

These words came to me as in waking dream
I watched Vesuvius' stream of fire come—
Then pass gently—warily—as tho' afraid
While whispering, "'Ware maiden! I'm for destruction made."

To tell my story I have anticipated one reminiscence of Bella Napoli. I must now call to mind the rest of our visit there.

We stayed at Naples nine months, and should have been very happy there had it not been for the excessive heat, part of the time, and for the dirt the whole time. I hear that things have improved in this latter way during the last few years, which must be a mercy to all concerned, and less of a

discord to those who enjoy the marvellous beauties of the place.

Soon after our arrival there was a tremendous storm at sea, destroying innumerable Neapolitan fishing-boats and drowning the poor sailors. Can it be believed? The poor dead bodies were left for days, floating close to the shore, without any attempt being made to bring them to land! Numbers of church dignitaries, priests and monks, hovered about with bells, images, and other Roman Catholic religious symbols, but not a soul with a boat or a spade till, for reasons which we need not particularise, large planks were brought to the edge of the water, upon which the poor bodies were placed flat on their faces, and then they were bound tightly, swathed round, and carried away without further ceremony, and we were told they were cast into a pit a few miles away. Of course I saw the bodies in the sea, but the rest of the tale I tell "as 'twas told to me."

The other horror of *la bella Napoli* was the filth of the inhabitants.

My stepfather and I used to ride on horseback a good deal, and it was a curious fact that I was the only *lady* in Naples who rode then. The

pretty *contadines* used to ride their mules to market (and *how* pretty they were in their dress of Italy, and with their dark eyes !) but no *ladies* rode. The Neapolitan ladies in those days seemed to think much of their personal appearance, and on my remarking this once to a lady I knew and who was intimate with some of the Neapolitan *grandes dames*, she told me that several of them were bled every morning to keep them pale ! As my step-father and I rode out of a morning we were considered quite a sight of the place, but as I was excessively nervous and did not ride well, it must have been but a poor one. Still, the Neapolitans, and more especially the children, thought it a sight, and every day they were to be seen, as we passed, sitting on the steps of a particular church by the road-way, where there were tiers of steps—the women and children sitting one above the other, cleaning each other's heads ! Directly they saw *me* coming they would shout, " Ecco la dama a cavallo," and they would leave their occupation, jump and scramble down the steps, the children shrieking, and the women (it makes me shudder even now to think of it !) throwing their arms and filthy hands round my habit, and asking us for

money. At last we had to whip up our horses to get away.

Another blemish of the most beautiful city in the world was the wretched crippled beggars. We had to ride every day through the Grotto di Posilippo. The grotto was then the only nice ride out of Naples. It was a longish tunnel, and always, standing at each end, were crowds of crippled beggars, who used to horrify one by suddenly thrusting into one's face a crippled arm, or, by some apparently mechanical process, a mutilated leg. Or they would tear off their shirts and horrify us by the sight of an excoriated back, imploring our sympathy, which we gave, and also any change we had in our pockets, to get away from the sight. We had the painful knowledge that we must return through it all again, as there was only this one good ride there and back.

After this experience was over we would come to a lovely old house with gardens hanging over the blue sea, and whenever we passed we were kindly greeted by a charming old gentleman with snowy hair, white coat and trousers (and boots), and a long white moustache. He was always working

hard in his garden. I knew him well. He was the great tenor, Signor Lablache, and this was his home.

Every day, also, as we rode up the hill, we were sure to meet a dear, delicate-looking little boy of about eight years of age. He was dressed in general's uniform, and was escorted by two gentlemen also in uniform. The child looked so sad. How could he be otherwise in such companionship, for I never saw him with another child? We never saw him smile or run. He once said as we passed, "La dama Inglise a cavallo." The Italian groom told us, "That boy will one day be *il Rè*." But he never was, poor child, for he died early. He was King Bomba's grandchild.

We used to be much interested in the grand funeral processions which took place every day along the Chiaja. Once I saw the funeral of a dead monk. He was exposed in a hearse, and covered with the most heavenly flowers. His grim dead face was uncovered and was staring up at the sky. It was the first time I had ever seen death, and it gave me quite a shock. The hands were crossed on the breast with a crucifix between them, and all the people who met the corpse got out of their

carriages, or off their horses, or out of their *cariccolos*, and knelt down in the dirt, crossing themselves vigorously and beating their breasts. A few minutes after the dead monk had passed we crossed the Chiaja and went into the lovely Villa Reale garden, and met face to face "la bella Frezzolini," the great actress and singer. She was carrying an enormous bouquet, pressing it up to her lovely, fresh, *enjoué* face, beaming with smiles. As I said above, I never had seen death before, and I remember this contrast of death and vivid life quite upset me again for the moment, but seemed to strike no one else.

* * * * *

My great desire at Naples was to make the ascent of Mount Vesuvius, and I worried till I got my way.

My mother would not go, but my stepfather took me and my sister. A family of the name of Sapte (a dear old man and his wife and daughter) joined our party.

We wished much to see the sun rise from the mountain top. It was very fatiguing, for there were no *helps* then as I hear there are now. There was a poor pony that was goaded up to the

monastery, where we were refreshed with "Lachrimæ Christi" and food. Then the difficulties began. All green pasture had, of course, disappeared, and we had nothing but cinders to walk upon.

Two men pushed me up from behind, while one or two—I forget which—dragged me up by a rope which was tied round my waist. I had been warned to put my oldest clothes on, which luckily I did, for by the time I arrived at the top I was in rags. We were tired to death, and an impromptu bed was made, while we awaited the rising of the sun. The guides who made the beds were so utterly filthy that I dared not look to see what the beds were made of.

One request the guides made, which was that none of the *signori* would wander too far from the rest, and the head guide pointed out the exact distance and told us a ghastly story of a lady who had *wandered*, and had never been found again, it being supposed, the guide said, she had approached too near the crater, been suffocated, and had fallen in. But the *signori* believed amongst themselves that the poor *dama* had had rough handling.

However, we took the man's warning—at least, *I* did—for I was so dead tired I lay down and slept soundly and was only aroused by my step-father shouting in my ear, "There's the sun." Words fail me to express the beauty of the sky in a blaze, and the sea of deepest blue.

Suddenly I looked round. "Where's Miss Sapte?" I said. She had left her bed of cinders and was nowhere to be seen. Her father and everybody were in an agony of fear, and went about searching near the crater. At last the silly girl, to our great joy, was found. She was quite insensible, with her head half over a crack in the crater. She was dragged away and restored by remedies the guides had with them, as they said there were always "imbeciles" amongst the "parties" they took up, who seemed bent on killing themselves.

There was great difficulty in getting the poor girl down the mountain. She did not seem to regret her adventure, however, for she said she had "seen sights and heard sounds that *we* had not," but mercifully it did her no permanent harm.

Once again we went up Vesuvius, and this

time when it was in eruption—a most wonderful sight! However, we had to be very careful, and I must say I felt glad when I was safely home again and in bed, for it was a most tiring and exciting expedition. After arriving at the friendly monastery, we were struck with amazement and excitement at the sight which met our eyes. There were rivulets of (apparently) liquid fire passing close by us, but turning away from us. There were different breadths of this liquid fire, but the guides told us that the direction they took depended entirely on the wind. It was a wonderful sight to see the rivers of fire slipping by, gently and noiselessly, like a brook, making no noise—no rushing noise like water. As we got higher up and could see the liquid fire issuing from the crater's mouth it terrified me.

"Papa," I said, "I want to go home to mama." And I think he was as glad to go as I was! What alarmed me most was that every now and then one saw fissures which seemed to have broken through both rock and cinders, and we never knew, of course, *where* another might next appear—perhaps just where we were sitting!

To this day it is a wonder to me how the

peasants around Vesuvius, after an eruption, in which their homes have been destroyed, can calmly rebuild their ruined houses and live fearlessly in them as before. Perhaps they have greater courage than I have, or, better still, greater faith.

* * * * *

One more curious occurrence and I think I have told my memories of Naples.

A great friend of ours, a naval captain, came to Naples when we were there, and we saw a great deal of him. He was Scotch, like my stepfather, and had the same dislike for the Roman Catholic beliefs and ceremonies.

There were always great functions on St. Januarius' Day, that holy man being Naples' own especial saint. On that occasion any great question of the day, whether political or otherwise, used to be settled after this curious fashion. A high dignitary of the Church would bring to the altar a large bowl, supposed to be filled with the saint's blood. This bowl was carried round to the kneeling people at the altar, and if at their touch the blood coagulated the saint was supposed to disapprove; if it became liquid he was supposed to be pleased.

Our naval friend, hearing of the coming

function, declared it was only a juggler's trick, and said that he would go and kneel and see if he could *find a spring*. He went and tried, but what was the upshot I never heard. All I did hear was that the unbeliever had to leave Naples post haste.

We left Bella Napoli with regret, despite all drawbacks. To-day, even, I recall the ineffable beauty and charm of this, surely, the most beautiful, spot of God's earth.

IX

PARIS AND LOUIS PHILIPPE

1847-8

> And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
> To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak
> Of freedom, the forbidden fruit.
>
> BYRON.

I

THE COURT OF LOUIS PHILIPPE

I WAS in Paris between the years 1847-9—those years fraught with disaster to kings, queens and all in authority—a young girl full of happy hopes and expectations, for in *la ville lumière* I was to "come out."

Louis Philippe was then "King of the French," and as, during his long exile in England, he had been intimate with my mother's relations, upon hearing of our arrival in Paris he showed great anxiety to be civil to us.

The French Court was at St. Cloud for a few weeks, but we received a kind intimation from the King that he would like us to pay him and the Queen, Marie Amélie, a visit one evening after dinner, as the weather was fine and the drive would be agreeable.

I cannot call to mind the exact date of our visit to beautiful St. Cloud, but I think it must have been in the early days of the month of September 1847.

Here I must break my narrative for a moment, in order to give my younger readers a piece of advice in four words—always keep a Journal. Whether you be surrounded by stirring events, by strange or historical characters, or whether you be quietly at home, I repeat, *keep a Journal.* It need not be one in which you enlarge upon your private ideas and sacred feelings, for if by an evil chance the lines should be read by an unscrupulous stranger, they might lay you open to ridicule. Besides, when one is very young one changes one's opinions oftener than one realises, or cares to confess. Also, chronicling things that are better kept to one's self may be dangerous ; for any surreptitious reader, should he be capable of the

bassesse of perusing what was plainly *not* meant for his eyes, would be equally capable of telling the matter. This happened once to me, and consequently I was foolish enough to give up my Journal entirely ; therefore, everything I write now is from memory. I advise my young readers simply to chronicle their everyday common incidents, mentioning the people they meet and the places they see, *with aates,* and memory easily fills in the blanks.

But to proceed with my narrative. On the evening in question we drove to St. Cloud, that beautiful, stately, and now, alas ! non-existent palace. An official, with whom we were acquainted, was on the look-out for us. With but little ceremony he conducted us through several saloons into the presence of the good old Queen, Marie Amélie, who was seated on a sofa at a very large round table, surrounded by many female members of the Royal Family of France.

With my innate love for *objets d'art,* I was at once struck by the beauty of this round table. It was of rosewood, with carved and gilt legs, and it shone like a looking-glass, reflecting the lights and the people after a dazzling fashion. The Queen

was dressed in black, very simply, and wore no jewels. When we entered she most kindly rose to embrace my mother, and placed her on the sofa by her side. The Queen was knitting a coarse grey shawl, and laid her work by, on the table, so as to devote herself, in her gentle condescension, to making my mother welcome. She spoke smilingly to me, and gave me her hand to kiss, and then presented us both to the old Princess Adelaide (the King's sister), who was sitting on the sofa on her other side. This Princess Adelaide was a shrewd-looking old lady. She was also dressed in black, and wore what caused me some girlish amusement—an old-fashioned lace cap, tied under the chin, exactly like what we call in Scotland a "match."

The princess bowed very kindly to us both, but she looked very weary, and the words she spoke were in a very feeble voice. Indeed, she lived but a few months from that evening.

After we had sat at the table for about twenty minutes, during which time the Queen asked after every member of my mother's family whom she remembered, the Princess Adelaide whispered a word into her sister-in-law's ear. The Queen

rose at once (as we all did) and, after saying a few gentle words to the old princess about the *journée* having been *assez longue*, she gave her her arm, and guided her very carefully to a door, which I had not yet perceived, and where there were some attendants waiting outside to receive her. The two royal ladies kissed one another affectionately in the doorway and bade each other good-night. The Queen then returned to the sofa, reseated herself, and made my mother do the same.

The younger princesses, who had also risen to bid their aged relative good-night, also sat down again, and I, who had been hoping that the time had now come for my mother and myself to make our farewell curtseys and depart (it seemed to me a deadly dull function!) was fated to be disappointed. But I was now taken in hand by the pretty Duchesse de Nemours, who, with her lovely complexion and soft, fair curls, was very pleasant to look upon. She talked brightly to me about Paris and its sights, and also presented me to the lady on her right hand, who turned out to be no other than the young Spanish bride, the Duchesse de Montpensier, sister to Queen Isabella.

My mother and I, during our drive to St.

Cloud, had wondered whether we should see this lady, so lately the cause of great political heart-burnings, so lately, also, the prize coveted and obtained by King Louis Philippe's astute management. I was therefore deeply interested in seeing her. She was not pretty, I thought, but lively-looking, and was very good-natured to me. She had her work like the rest of the princesses, and I fancied she looked rather "bored."

As I was answering something the duchess had said to me the Queen addressed me across the table. She said, in a motherly fashion, that she feared I was spending rather a dull evening, there being no one of my own age to talk to, and would I like, therefore, to *passer* into the small *salle* adjoining (she pointed to an open door on the other side of the room), where there was some beautiful china and other things which would amuse me.

I rose, and after making a profound curtsey to the thoughtful Queen I *passé*-ed into the room as I was commanded, and truly found some lovely things within it of china, knick-knacks, pictures, and miniatures. I amused myself by wondering to how many kings and queens

these articles had belonged, and whether poor Josephine had ever admired them as I was doing. When I entered the room at first I found it empty, but as I was standing admiring some lovely blue Sèvres a door opened behind me, and I saw in a looking-glass the reflection of a gentleman, who came in alone. He watched me for a few moments, but I was far too shy to look at *him*. I pretended I was not aware of his presence, but presently, as he approached me, I looked up, and said to myself (although I had never seen him before), "It is the King." And I curtseyed deeply.

King Louis Philippe (for he it was) nodded kindly, and, putting out his hand, placed it lightly on my shoulder, saying in perfect English, "I know who *you* are from your likeness to —— and " —— (mentioning some of my relations). "But *you*—how do *you* know who *I* am?"

I answered, "I know you from the pictures I have seen of you, sir."

He laughed and said, "Ah, yes! The pictures in *Punch*, I suppose?"

I laughed this time and nodded, and he seemed much amused. After a few words about the *objets d'art* in the room he took my hand and led me

back to the Queen in the next room, and I heard him repeat to her our conversation about *Punch*, at which she and the princesses laughed very much, and *I* thought privately that they all seemed highly amused at mighty little.

II. THE FALL OF LOUIS PHILIPPE

The next time I saw the King and Queen it was under very different circumstances. It was in the month of February 1848.

The whole of Paris was in revolt, and the Champs Elysées was infested by mobs, while the firing of cannon was to be heard on the other side of the river and in the farther parts of the city.

We lived in the Rue de Berri, not far from the Arc de Triomphe, and therefore we were considerably out of the town and away from the fighting ; rather more so, in fact, than my sister and I cared for. For we, being young and foolish, did not know what fear was, and were in the habit of walking out constantly with a French maid we had, who was middle-aged, and a sort of tower of strength, whose politics, also, were iridescent, and like those of the immortal Pickwick (who,

whenever he met two mobs, shouted with the largest). We felt safe under her wing, and she also liked going out with us to see whatever was to be seen.

We were, of course, forbidden to take our walks beyond the Champs Elysées, for the "people" were thoroughly roused, and barricades, we heard, were already erected in the Faubourg St. Antoine; but all *we* ever came across in our peregrinations was now and again a mob of people marching into Paris from the outlying villages. The chance, however, of such encounters even as these, would, one would have thought, have been quite enough to alarm three women, and how we ever had the courage to run these risks I cannot now conceive. But, of course, one sees dangers after the event which one missed in the curiosity of the moment.

Oh! those horrid women who generally were the leaders of these mobs! No place under heaven but Paris could produce such women! with their black, unkempt hair streaming over their shoulders, their savage eyes, coarse faces, and scarcely decent rags, brandishing in their hands anything they could get in the way of weapons—iron bars and shovels. A woman once passed us

carrying a large china doll, holding it by the legs, and one felt with a shudder that its silly, smiling face could have given one a crushing blow if artistically swung. Then the coarse *gestes* of these viragos, and the vile language with which they diversified their march—language which we did not understand, but which Louise did! Generally very young men were led by these unsexed animals, and whenever we saw a mob of this kind coming we would run into a *porte cochère*, if there was one available, or up a side avenue, hide ourselves behind the trees, and wait till the crowd had gone by.

One day a mob suddenly appeared about two hundred yards from us, round a corner, so we separated, I and my sister running into a side avenue to hide behind some felled trees, while Louise crouched down behind a heap of stones on the roadway. Presently I and my sister saw a *fiacre*, with only one horse, approach and go trotting by. As it passed we looked curiously in at its occupants, and, with a pang of sympathy and regret which I shall never forget, we beheld an old lady with white hair, thin features, and a pale, kind face, in company with another lady and an old gentleman, whose face

and neck were much muffled up. But both I and my sister instantly recognised the alarming truth—namely, that we had been the witnesses of the King and Queen's escape from the Tuileries !

We agreed not to tell the maid ; but when we got home we were met at the door by my mother, who, with a scared face, told us that the King had abdicated and escaped, that a Republic was proclaimed, and that we must get back to England as quickly as we could. But this we found to be no easy matter. My stepfather repaired at once to the Embassy to consult Lord Normanby as to the passports, &c., and there he found congregated most of the English whom we knew, all on the same quest. The Ambassador advised us to wait patiently, which advice we followed, for the best possible reason in the world—namely, that we were obliged to do so ; for not till all the confusion was over were steamers allowed to ply between France and other countries.

* * * * *

After these stirring events, and while waiting to get away from Paris, we young ladies were kept prisoners at home, as it was not considered safe for us to run the risk of further adventures. This

we thought very tiresome, for we were not even allowed to leave the house, except under the escort of our old French courier (Ferdinand), who had lived with us ever since I was a child. He was considered a safe protector, and was allowed to take us out one at a time.

Ferdinand had travelled with us in Germany and Italy for the previous two years and a half, and during that time had been our courier, cook, nurse, friend, and, in fact, everything that an old French servant of the *ancien régime* alone can be! The reason, too, why he was considered our safest escort at present was because, from living quietly in old England for so many years, he had given up his nationality—his worship of *la patrie* and *la gloire*—and was eminently cautious whenever and wherever he scented danger.

My mother knew also that, besides this element of prudence in his nature, he loved us children too dearly ever to leave us in an emergency, and she considered it a valuable quality in the old Frenchman that he knew exactly when and where it was safest for him to take to his heels, and make us do the same.

One evening, when it was almost dusk, Ferdinand

came into our salon, and, making me a private sign, got me out of the room and told me that if I liked to come out for half an hour he would take me "to see something I should never see again, nor ever forget."

Bursting with curiosity, I put my bonnet on and quietly left the house with him. The Champs Elysées was tolerably quiet, but as we passed through the Rue de Rivoli I was aware of a throng of people who seemed to be eagerly pursuing the same path as ourselves.

Suddenly we crossed the road, and after much hustling and abuse, such as "Sacré nom d'un chien!" (although the people seemed quite good-humoured), we found ourselves in a dense crowd, standing behind the dear old Tuileries Palace, and jammed up against its golden-tipped gates which protected the court at the back, or were meant to do so.

We had a full view of the open court and of the back of the palace, and at first sight I thought I was looking at a bonfire; and so, alas! I was, for I cannot enumerate how many beautifully gilded, painted, and enamelled coaches I saw, lined with brocades and trimmed with exquisite gold lace,

some very old (of the time of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. Ferdinand whispered to me), some new, and all beautiful! Each of these was drawn up in order, calmly awaiting its execution; and as the time for each came I saw it savagely seized upon by dirty, unhallowed, unappreciative hands, broken up by filthy men—*and women*—and cast into the flames. As each golden fragment was thrown in, a fresh burst of flame and sparks arose, hissing and spitting, and was greeted by the coarse delight of the yelling mob, which took hands and danced round the fire as it shrieked out its wicked ribald songs. There were curses, too, and shouts against kings and queens in particular, and *les aristocrates* in general; and as I watched the flames burning and swaying in the wind, and heard the horrid crackling in the semi-darkness, I could not but shudder at the unearthly appearance of the grotesque and filthily begrimed mob as it danced and yelled, each figure appearing at one moment lurid and distinct, and at the next shadowy and almost hidden by the ruddy, rolling smoke.

As the work of destruction went on, I thought to myself, "Could hell be worse?—more awful?" With a heavy heart and scarcely repressed sob

at the thought of that gracious and gentle lady Queen Amélie, who so lately had looked from those very carriage windows, acknowledging with kindly bows the salutes of the passers-by, and perhaps smiling on some of these very individuals who were now ready to tear her and her husband limb from limb, I turned to Ferdinand and whispered, "Take me away. *You were right.* I never shall forget this horrid sight, and I pray God I may never see such another. And I wish —oh, how I wish I had never seen this!"

III. THE DUNDONALDS

Among the many famous people I met during our sojourn in Paris were Lord and Lady Dundonald. My mother did not know either of them personally till we went to Paris, and Lady Dundonald was profuse in her affection for my mother, as being the daughter of King William IV., who all through her husband's career had supported him under many vicissitudes and attacks.

Lord Dundonald was the son of the ninth Earl of Dundonald. He was first known as Lord Cochrane, and before he succeeded to the Earldom

he was very poor, for his father had ruined the family by scientific experiments. He had to begin life, he always said, as the heir to a very old peerage without other expectations than those arising from his own exertions. He entered the Navy at seventeen or eighteen, and after a voyage to Norway became a lieutenant in 1796. Two years later he became master and commander, and with the *Speedy*, a sloop of war of fourteen guns, and fifty-four men (the least efficient craft in the Mediterranean), in ten months or a year he took thirty vessels, of one of which he was made post-captain. That was in 1801. In the same year, however, the *Speedy* herself was taken by the French fleet under Admiral Linois ; but so great had been the admiration for Lord Cochrane's (as he was then) courage, that on tendering his sword it was at once returned to him. Soon afterwards he went on half-pay and returned to England, and there it was that he married a Miss Barnes, a most lovely young girl. He ran away with her from a boarding-school, and how she could have done it I never could think, for he was the ugliest man I ever saw, with a nose like a pincushion, which looked as though it must once have been broken, and then

that attempts had been made to pinch it into shape! In those days there were none of those wonderful advertisements one sees now about "ugly noses."

They married and had several children, one most beautiful daughter, Lady Katharine, who married a Mr. Fleming, who was a great yachtsman. When I was at Naples, Lady Katharine used to live in her yacht, and go to all the Court and other balls, always sleeping on board her yacht. All the Italian princes were in love with her, especially the Duc d'Aguila, who offended everybody very much by one night, as he was leaving the ballroom of the palace in procession with the King, turning round and openly kissing his hand to the fair Katharine as he left the room.

Lord Cochrane had got into some terrible scrapes —money scrapes—something to do with the money prizes of some vessels, and he was actually committed to prison. People went to prison for all sorts of things in those days. He was deprived of the Order of the Bath, of his rank in the Navy, and his seat in the House of Commons, but the electors of Westminster again returning him their member, he broke from prison and took his seat. He was,

however, recaptured. All through his troubles William IV., then the Duke of Clarence, upheld him and took his part.

In 1818 Lord Cochrane and his beautiful wife went to Chili, and he aided in establishing the Republic there and the Empire of Brazil. His wife was with him, showing as much courage and audacity as her husband. She was made Mistress of the Robes to the Empress of Brazil, and she used to tell a long story of her once being employed by the Emperor to ride across the mountains alone, entrusted with most valuable documents to some friendly Power. I don't know exactly *where* or what for, but some brigands got hold of her, and, tearing her off her horse, searched her thoroughly, as they thought, and when she tried to escape, wounded her severely with a stiletto (she often showed me the mark). In spite of it all, she saved her papers, shot one of her assailants, and galloped off safe and nearly sound.

In 1831 Lord Cochrane's father died and he became the tenth Earl of Dundonald, and in 1841 was made Vice-admiral of the Blue. In 1847 the Order of the Bath was restored to him and he was created a G.C.B.

It is always said that Lord Dundonald was a modern Themistocles, but all his life people spoke of him with bated breath, although he was one of the bravest men that ever lived.

Years later Lady Dundonald was presented to Queen Victoria at Court by my mother. She died a few years later at a pretty house she had bought at Boulogne-sur-Mer.

X

THE COURT OF HANOVER

1850

"But we were to go to the palace, and *this* is a common hotel."

These words issued from the indignant lips of my mother on arriving at Hanover. She was accompanied by her two daughters, myself and my sister.

The old King Ernest Augustus of Hanover (Duke of Cumberland, son of George III.) was much attached to my mother. Hearing we were abroad he warmly invited her, with us girls, to pay him a visit at the Court of Hanover. So my mother's surprise and astonishment were great when we drove up, not to the palace, but to the hotel—having been met by a gentleman on horseback, who escorted us, informing us that that was to be our residence instead of the palace.

In those days an hotel in a small German town was not very imposing in its appearance, but as we reached the entrance a royal carriage drove up, out of which a kind-looking old lady alighted, who embraced my mother and took her into the hotel. After a short conversation this lady told my mother some facts which we girls only heard some long time after—namely, that in spite of King Ernest's wish to have us as guests in the palace, he had been persuaded not to do so by old Madame G——, who at that time had supreme sway over him and all that belonged to him.

We soon got over our disappointment about the palace, for the old King was more than kind, calling almost every day. On one occasion my mother was very unwell and obliged to remain in bed. The King declared it was in consequence of her having made too free with the wild strawberries which abounded in the woods. This, however, became really a serious illness, for it culminated in a frightful swelling of the chin, which kept her in bed for days.

The first time we dined at the palace after our arrival we were much amused. The King was delighted to see us, and received us most affection-

ately. He was an old man even then—well over seventy—and was as magnificent a specimen of an English gentleman as I ever saw. He was enormously tall and finely made, and was always dressed in his Hussar uniform, with his sabretasche hanging at his side. To the delight of our youthful hearts, he rapped his heels sonorously and bowed every time he addressed us. He kissed my mother over and over again. A curious thing happened soon after we entered the room. We waited for some time—as evidently somebody was expected—and talked, *pour passer le temps ;* when suddenly the poor blind Crown Prince (afterwards George V.) walked in supported by his gentleman, and with the Crown Princess (now the ex-Queen Mary of Hanover) at his side.

The Crown Prince had not been told of my mother's expected arrival, but, as he walked in he stopped suddenly and exclaimed, "I hear a FitzClarence voice," and then a very affectionate and happy meeting took place between him and my mother.

The dinners at the palace were very amusing, especially if his Majesty chanced to be in a good temper. They began at half-past four o'clock.

After a not very long repast the King and his guests adjourned to another apartment, where a singular additional meal was served, consisting of coffee and raw ham. This meal having been discussed, the King and his guests used to start in various carriages to drive round Herrenhausen, the last vehicle containing the King and Madame G——.

Instead of returning to the palace, the guests were dropped at their respective homes, the King alone going back to the palace.

I may here state that the King's partialities were certainly not in favour of his German subjects or their country. He would have vastly preferred it had the crown of England devolved on him. If he *could* say a bitter thing to wound his Hanoverian subjects he never lost an opportunity of doing so. For instance, one night when something had put him out, he showed his contempt for his Hanoverian capital in this way: He asked my sister, who was sitting opposite him, where she had been that day.

She answered, "I have been a very long way, Sir. I took a long walk." Not being acquainted with the locality she was unable to explain to him exactly where she had been.

He replied, "Pish! nonsense; why the whole town is not larger than a fourpenny-piece."

The Hanoverians of course looked very angry, and the King was highly diverted, for the company all understood English.

The King had a curious habit, when he was in a good temper, of passing his plate, whether containing soup or fish, &c., to the lady seated next to him, but if his Majesty was put out, this gracious civility was omitted.

A curious thing happened one day to us at Hanover. My sister and I were out walking with a certain Mrs. Edgecombe, the wife of one of the English *attachés*. We were walking on a long, narrow, straight road bordered by trees, when we saw and heard a runaway, riderless horse approaching at full speed. So narrow was the road that it seemed impossible that we could escape injury. Mrs. Edgecombe flung herself down across the road, calling out to us to do the same—and we did so. How we all escaped injury I don't know, but we all were untouched. That evening the adventure was related to the King, who was very fond of Mrs. Edgecombe, and always delighted to have an excuse for kissing a pretty woman, he embraced her on

the spot, to show his delight at her escape. Her husband, who was present, remarked (I remember, rather drily), "Let us hope that your Majesty's embrace was *paternal*."

* * * * *

We were one morning seated at breakfast in the hotel. It was a delicious breakfast, consisting of *küchen*, *café*, and wild strawberries. Our arrangements had not yet been made for the day. Generally by this time the dinner command had arrived. However, after a short time of patience, a horseman rode up to the hotel and delivered the expected envelope. But it turned out not to be the one we had anticipated.

To-day the man awaited a reply, and we discovered that the present missive came from Mont-Brillant, the home of the Crown Prince and Princess, and contained a command for us to dine early with them in order to proceed with them on an expedition.

My mother wrote an acceptance to the invitation, and consequently, about half-past four, we found ourselves at Mont-Brillant. When we arrived there we saw that there was some evident excitement "in the wind." The Crown Prince and

Princess were both sitting in the intensest heat, beneath a haystack. They seemed delighted at our arrival. The Princess jumped up, and taking my mother by the arm, carried her off to a safe distance to disclose to her the mystery of the coming amusement. We then partook of a hasty repast, and the whole party, consisting of the Prince and Princess, some of their ladies and gentlemen, and ourselves, started for a village not far off, in hired carriages so as to avoid recognition, where there was to be a sort of *fête champêtre*—a village marriage.

"Mind," the Princess said, "it is a great secret. No one at the palace knows anything of our expedition; we may dance and amuse ourselves unknown to anybody." I remember thinking at the moment, how *could* that poor blind man, being led by his gentlemen, expect to go unrecognised?

My mother feared, and said so, that some annoyance would result from this expedition; for, however familiar the old King might be with those he cared for, whenever he was really put out his wrath was very terrifying, as we discovered to our cost the next day.

We arrived at the country village, which was in the centre of a wood, and a pretty sight it was, with peasants dressed in different costumes and holding myriads of lanterns. It struck me at the time, and I think so still even after all these years, that these picturesque preparations must have been made with the knowledge that some persons, other than the villagers, would grace the scene. The dance did not last very long, but of one thing I am certain—*i.e.*, that my sister and I never enjoyed one more. The *danseurs* were all so handsome, and the way they danced was so peculiar.

They did not place their arms round our waists as is done in England, but put their hands upon our hips, while our hands rested on their shoulders. I could not help, while enjoying my own dancing, watching the poor Crown Prince, who, having been placed at a table, with pipes and mugs upon it, playing at being one of the common herd, seemed to enjoy the music, which certainly was perfectly beautiful.

After a little while the time came for us to return, and we started for home.

My mother had felt rather nervous about the whole amusement—as to how the King would take

it if he found it out—and her fears proved to be correct. Our dinner command on the next morning arrived, but without the usual affectionate message.

So my mother felt rather uneasy. We saw none of the royal people all day, and none of their belongings. But on our arrival at the palace for dinner, we were met by one of his Majesty's gentlemen, who looked very glum, and who, as we were going to pass as usual into the salon, touched my mother on the shoulder and said we were not to go in at present as the Crown Prince and Princess were "having an audience!" This sounded so awful that my mother nearly fainted. We sat down and waited. We heard rather loud voices, and then suddenly the door burst open. The King came out first, looking like an avenging angel, while the Crown Prince and Princess followed. The latter was weeping bitterly and asking forgiveness.

The King, however, was in apparently a most unforgiving mood. He merely clicked his heels together, bowed deeply and coldly to both his son and his daughter-in-law, and gave them their *congé*. They instantly left the palace, and we saw them no more that night.

My mother was much distressed, and approached the King, asking his forgiveness. He gave his hand to her to kiss, but he was very cold and distant in his manner at dinner, and *did not pass her his plate.*

After dinner, when they were sitting in the salon, the King, who was evidently softening gradually, came close to her on the sofa, laid his hand kindly on her shoulder, and said, "I forgive you my dear, but you are older than the others, and ought to have known better." We stayed some months longer at Hanover and enjoyed ourselves immensely. The King was ever the same to us, kindly and affectionate, for at heart he was of a kindly nature.

The greatest pleasure, almost, of his life at that time was his little grandson, the present Duke of Cumberland, who was then quite a small child. Indeed, I am not sure that at that time he was able to walk alone. He was a very ugly child, with a perfectly flat nose. Every day after dinner, at a given moment, the two folding-doors at the top of the dining-room were thrown open, and two smart nurses would appear, one carrying the nice, fat, ugly baby, which was taken straight to its grandfather's (the old King's) arms.

It was touching to see the otherwise stern and impatient old man open his arms delightedly, as the ugly and anything but well-behaved child seized hold of the small white tuft of hair which still ornamented his grandfather's head ; all the while screaming, kicking over the salt-cellars, and catching hold of the King's eye-glass. This last performance was rather dangerous, and generally at this point of the amusement the King would endeavour to disengage himself from the struggling and, by now, indignant infant—a disentanglement which was achieved with some difficulty.

The last amusement the child craved for and daily received was as follows: The King would open his mouth (a mouth full of the most beautiful teeth even at that age), put out his tongue, and the child would pass his hands and cheeks over it—a performance which caused great delight to the royal grandfather, but rather a shudder to the onlookers. This performance over, the King would rise and say, "Now let us go to the nursery and see him washed," a process which most of the company considered very necessary after the licking. As soon as we (the King, the Crown Prince and Princess, and some of the ladies and gentlemen) got up into the nurseries,

chairs were placed round a tub full of hot water, into which some sweet scent was thrown ; then we all sat and watched the child's natural delight in his bath. The King generally got wet through. The poor blind Crown Prince, when any especial splash or delighted screech from the child took place, used to turn round with an amused laugh and ask, " What part of his body is being washed now ? " I need not say that this was rather an awkward question at times.

One evening after the child had been washed and put to bed and all the royalties got rid of, old Madame ——, who loved my mother, took her to see the late Queen of Hanover's bedroom, which, according to a curiously sentimental fashion, was always prepared as though the dead lady were to rest in the room that night. The bed was turned down, the pillow smoothed, hot water and even slippers brought—and all this for the Queen who had been dead for years !

The Queen, it seems, had died from some mysterious illness, which no one understood in those days. A certain soothsayer had been called in, who had written curious signs and words upon the door of her room, close to the bed.

These words had been repeated over and over again, but with no effect.

After the Queen's death the writing had been covered over with sheet glass to preserve it.

Our happy time at Hanover came to an end all too soon, but we had the delight of two or three balls, and nothing can equal, to my recollection, the beauty of the military bands. To dance to a Hanoverian band was, to me, a dream of ecstasy. There was one especial brass band, the softness and sweetness of which I can never forget. King Ernest desired that band (I do not remember the number of instruments, all brass, but it was large) to play by itself. The music was softer and more entrancing in its tones than anything I ever heard before or since.

A curious custom used to take place at these Court balls, which I never knew of elsewhere. It was as follows: If a pair of lovers had made up their minds to enter the hymeneal state, they had to give notice of their intention a certain time before the ball, and the happy pair had to stand together as the King passed by and to ask him for his consent and blessing. This he generally gave with much gusto and with jokes that used

to bring the pink colour into the bride-elect's cheeks.

Another curious custom was that no girl was ever asked to dance *if she were dressed in black.* We did not know this till later on during our visit. When, however, we became cognisant of the fact, we were careful to avoid the dismal colour.

The King was very autocratic in his ways, and was very angry because the English clergyman, upon being asked to one of the balls, humbly begged the King to spare him the heat and discomfort of attending the function in his clerical black-silk gown. This request the King angrily refused, saying that every Court had its own fashions, and he had his. So the chaplain did not go to the ball.

One other circumstance I recall with great pleasure. That is, the King taking us one day into the magnificent stables of Herrenhausen to see one of the beautiful white horses which had been trained to rear after the Hanoverian fashion at the sound of his master's voice—a voice, alas! long since silent.

These happy days are over, but they will never be forgotten by me.

There is no Kingdom of Hanover now—no King

of Hanover—no grand old Hussar of dignified and kingly mien—for he, with all his faults (which I, as a young girl knew nothing about), was one's ideal of a kingly man, both in manner and appearance, and he was ever kind and affectionate to my mother and myself.

XI

THE EARLY COURT OF QUEEN VICTORIA

1850

Standing with reluctant feet
Where the brook and river meet.

We came back to England in 1850, and took up our life again at Kensington Palace. Then I and my sister duly "came out" and were presented, and made our appearance in the world as "young ladies." I think I used to love the Court balls at Buckingham Palace as much as any other balls we ever went to. People used to say they were not "good dancing balls" and for people who were *naïfs* enough to go to a ball to dance (!) perhaps they were not; but even so, to a young, happy, healthy girl, many a good happy dance was to be enjoyed in Buckingham Palace.

In those days the present large ballroom had

neither been "born nor thought of." The dancing took place in two rooms, and one of the principal features of the entertainment, and certainly the one that guests looked forward to most, was that several times during the evening Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and their suite would change from one room to the other, and the procession, &c., used to be gorgeous and amusing to a degree. It took place thus :

In the midst of some waltz or quadrille an agitated official with a long wand would rush excitedly into the centre of the dancers, then by dint of calling out and frantically (I never thought this part of the programme looked very dignified) waving his wand, he would at last attract the attention of the generally, and curiously, oblivious musicians, who would at last become aware of the seriousness of their position and of the whole state of the case. They would stop playing, one of them, a sleepy one, I suppose, invariably continuing on his waltz or his quadrille longer than the rest, and then "God Save the Queen" struck up. All the couples who had been dancing would form a line, then the Queen would glide by, bowing right and left, after a graceful fashion peculiarly her own,

towards the seats prepared for her and the Prince and the other royalties, and for the ladies and gentlemen of their suite, which were ranged round one side of the room.

At one of these Court balls an amusing circumstance occurred, which I never heard mentioned by any one. It was witnessed by my mother before I "came out," who related it to me.

The Queen and the other Royalties, after some ball or concert, had been in to supper, and the signal had been given for the return to the ball-room. The Queen, in a fit of absent-mindedness, as she turned from the supper-table, instead of taking up her fan, which had been lying by the side of her plate, took up a large fork !

She went forward some steps into the ball-room before discovering her mistake, bowing and smiling as was her wont; but then the Prince Consort, discovering the awkward fact, took away the alarming weapon, substituting the less dangerous one (the fan) instead.

* * * * *

As I am writing of Queen Victoria and her Court in the earlier part of her reign, I may as well jot down here (though not in strict sequence)

some stories of her Majesty in those years, which came to me first hand.

My uncle, Lord Adolphus FitzClarence, was for many years captain of the Royal Yacht, and often told us amusing anecdotes. One very funny incident took place one evening at the royal dinner on board.

The Queen used often to command certain favoured individuals to dine with her and the Prince on board the yacht, and one night some favoured admiral or captain was bidden, and on his arrival, he found to his horror that he was late, that, in fact, the Queen and the Prince had already sat down to dinner.

Upon entering the presence he was so covered with confusion that the Queen did all she could to comfort him and set him at his ease ; but the unfortunate man *would not* be comforted, and in his distress he gradually kept bowing and bowing, and consequently backing and backing, unfortunately not noticing a tray, covered with glass and china, which stood behind him. Soon, however, there was a crash, a tremendous sound of rolling and smashing—and there the story leaves me. I know, however, that the Sovereign did not forthwith command that

the offender's head should be struck off; on the contrary, I heard it whispered that with the true instinct of a kind heart the Queen laughed at the incident, and pitying the poor man's confusion and annoyance, soon turned the *contretemps* into a joke, and treated him afterwards rather as an old friend.

Another story my uncle told me was of one night on board the yacht in which he had spent hours of untold anxiety. The Queen, all her life, was passionately fond of fresh air, but on board the yacht, and in her private cabin, this was only obtainable by keeping the port-holes open, and, needless to say, under certain circumstances this would not be possible—would not be safe. One night—or rather in the small hours of the morning—a gale suddenly arose, and my uncle knew, to his great anxiety and distress, that the port-holes in the royal cabin were open. What was to be done? They *must* be shut! and no one but the captain could venture into the royal cabin—the Queen's bedroom! So, screwing up his courage to the sticking-place, he softly and with cat-like steps entered the sacred cabin, crept across it, shut the port-holes, crept back

again undiscovered, and "turned in," greatly relieved.

Two amusing little anecdotes I must set down and then I have done. One day Lord Adolphus was sent for by her Majesty, who seemed greatly perturbed, informing my non-plussed uncle that one of the royal children had been bitten during the previous night by a daring and (presumably) over-loyal flea! The cabin *must* be searched, &c. &c. My poor uncle was much upset. How *could* such an awful contingency have arrived. Search was instituted high and low, and upon the subject being freely discussed among the sailors, one of them came forward and said "he knew where the flea came from!" He had chanced to see H.R.H. the Prince of Wales *scratching the nose of the cow*, of which pastime H.R.H. was very fond. (A cow was always kept on board the yacht to supply the Royal Family and children with milk.) As her Majesty seemed quite satisfied with this solution of so dark a mystery, every one seemed to follow suit. The flea, however, was never found, and never heard of again.

One other short story and then my royal

anecdotes are finished. Her Majesty, when on a cruise, was always, of course, attended by a medical man. A "Dr. Brown" was, I believe, for years the favourite Æsculapius. He was not a young man, and the Queen and Prince Consort were always gracious and cordial towards him, often holding long interesting conversations with him. The Princess Royal (the late Empress Frederick), being a clever, witty, and moreover an affectionate child, got much attached to the doctor, whom she persisted in addressing in the form of "Brown" *pur et simple*. The Queen disapproved of this familiarity, and forbade it. The gentleman was to be called "Dr. Brown" by the little princess. The young lady, however, refused to obey, or rather, continued to disobey, always saying familiarly whenever she saw or met the doctor:

"Ah, Brown! How d'ye do, Brown?"

At last the Queen got angry at this disobedience to her wishes, and told the young lady that the next time she broke her mother's commands she should *instantly* be sent *to bed*. The youthful Princess heard and thoroughly comprehended the threat, for the next morning

that the doctor appeared the young lady called out :

"Ah, Brown ! Good-morning, Brown. Glad to see you, Brown ; but now I must also say *good-night*, Brown, for I'm going to bed, Brown !"

And to bed she went.

XII

MARRIAGE

1855

I. HOMBURG

On April 17, 1855, my sister Millicent and I were married (for we had a double wedding). I married my first cousin, the second Earl of Munster; my sister married Mr. Hay Erskine Wemyss, of Wemyss Castle.

The day before our marriage, I remember, was supposed to be a great day for England, for the Emperor of the French, Napoleon III., came with his lovely wife, the Empress Eugénie, to visit Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.

The royal visitors were to drive through London *en procession*, and we went to a club in St. James' Street to see them pass.

The crowd was most hearty in its welcome, cheering and vociferating. The Empress looked

delighted and smiled continuously, but one could hardly see the Emperor's face, for he saluted the whole time, and one saw only his moustache.

Directly after our marriage my husband and I went abroad—to Homburg. In those days gambling was allowed at Homburg, and I am afraid it interested me more than it ought to have done. In later years I have invariably hated it, but *then* I actually gambled myself, and loved it. I felt, I confess, ashamed of the action, but I could never do things *en cachette*. Whatever I did, I did openly. So I actually sat down at the *rouge et noir* table and gambled, and won enough money to pay our bill at the hotel. But my "luck" did us but little good, for on getting home to the hotel and asking for our footman we were told he had "not come in yet." The next morning he waited at breakfast, but soon disappeared. Then we rang and rang, and the waiters came and told us he had "gone out." We waited and *waited* still, "thinking no evil," for the man had been known by us for some time, but on a hint from one of the waiters we began to look about us, and to our utter horror we found that the box in which we kept our money was clean

gone, as well as the man! We never heard of either the man or the money again, and my husband was too kind to think of trying to find the servant to prosecute him.

After we had been at Homburg for some weeks we wanted much to see the old schloss, in which my mother and our aunts (for my husband and I were first cousins) had spent many happy hours. Upon applying for a permit we got a most civil letter from the Grand Duke, who was then in residence, saying that "he knew all about us," and (I may tell this *now*, being old and *worn out*, and *ces beaux jours sont passés*) he heard that I was "no mean representative of my beautiful aunts, whom he knew well." He added that, "although he could not escort us himself, being old and weak, if we wished to go over the schloss he would see we had an attendant to show us everything, and that refreshment should be there if we required it."

We were, of course, much pleased, and settled the day and hour. The next morning at twelve o'clock we started. We were received by quite a martial-looking individual, who took us all over the old castle, and in one of the best bedrooms we

came across a portrait of one of my aunts (Amelia, Lady Falkland).

We both of us remarked that whenever we went into a fresh room our guide used carefully to close one half of the door and leave the other open. All the doors were two-leaved. After we got home I wrote and thanked the Grand Duke for his kindness in making everything so easy for us, and I got a kind answer. I heard from one of the Grand Duke's gentlemen that his Grand Ducal Highness had wanted much to see me, and yet was too shy (!) to come and speak to us. But he had been "so much pleased by the lady's appearance that he had hidden behind almost every door to see her go by!" I need not say that I was much flattered and amused.

During our stay at Homburg there was the most terrible thunderstorm I ever remember before or since. In the same hotel in which we were staying, Lady Elizabeth Dawson, an old lady of the Catholic Apostolic persuasion, was staying also. The storm was in the middle of the night. She jumped out of her bed, lit a candle, and rushed all over the hotel, opening the doors of the terrified occupants' rooms, and calling to them,

"Christ is at hand," which blessed event did not take place.

While we were there, several famous folk came to Homburg, amongst them the Duke and Duchess of Schleswig-Holstein Augustenburg (Prince Christian's father and mother), Prince Christian, and three daughters. The Duke was a fine-looking old man, and reminded me instantly of old King Ernest of Hanover. Upon my saying so, it was overheard and repeated to him. It seemed that his great admiration had been for King Ernest, and his great object in life had been to imitate him. So my words delighted him, and forthwith he desired that I should be presented to him, and presented I was. We saw a good deal of the family, my dear husband walking out with Prince Christian almost every day, little knowing that he would some day marry one of our princesses—Princess Helena.

One day the Duchess of Augustenburg, who was a beautiful old lady, with grey hair and charming manners, sent for me, and asked me to chaperon her daughters, who wished to attend the band. She herself was ill and could not go. So I did. I got to know two of the Princesses pretty well, and when the day came for us to leave they seemed to

regret our departure very much. I have hardly ever seen them since.

II. GREAT MALVERN

Soon after the birth of my first dear child, we went to Great Malvern for a change. It was, and is, a lovely place, for its "everlasting hills" have not changed. At the time we were there a most weird-looking man used (literally) to crawl all over the hills singing hymns! We could hear his stentorian voice at all hours, and never in the same place, but always somewhere *in the hills*, where he was not seen. His voice was *beautiful*, like the bass stop of an organ. They said that he was not quite right in his mind. He was always in rags, but never begged, and used to sing all day long. I never heard his history, except that people said he was religiously mad, which, after all, is not saying much against him.

Another thing amused me much. Great Malvern, although then called "Great" was *small* to what it is now, and I used to be out walking all day long with my baby and the nurse. I was afraid that my powers of endurance rather taxed those of the poor nurse, so every evening, at about five

o'clock, I used to take her with the baby to a sort of "Gunter's," where we had tea, little cakes, ices, &c. One afternoon we had gone in as usual for our little meal, and just as we were coming out I noticed that quite a crowd had collected round the exit. I waited a little, hoping the mob (for it was literally a mob) would disperse before we left, but finding that the number of "inquisitives" only got larger, and was rather unpleasant, I went into an inner room and asked the master of the shop what the people were waiting for.

He civilly went out, and I saw him questioning a man, but the crowd did not budge an inch. So when he came back I begged him to let us out by a back door, which he did, and thereupon explained the cause of the crowd. He *laughed* and said that one of the women had told him that she and others had been told that there was a *monster baby* in the shop, and that she and all of the crowd were waiting to see it come out !—(a play, of course, on the name of Munster). I escaped out the other side with my "monster baby," and got safely home.

XIII

A TRUE GHOST STORY

My last reminiscence will be of a ghost story, for which I can vouch the truth.

My sister Millicent (who, as I have said, married Mr. Hay Erskine Wemyss, of Wemyss Castle) herself told me the story.

There was a large party staying at Wemyss Castle for Christmas, and my sister had arranged some theatricals for Christmas evening for the amusement of her guests. She had driven out to Kirkcaldy, the nearest town in those days, to purchase several requisites for the evening's amusement, and had not returned when what I am about to relate took place.

I ought to have begun by stating that "the ghost" of Wemyss Castle was always styled "Green Jean," and was supposed to appear in the form of a beautiful, tall, slim lady, clad in a long gown

of green that " swished " very much as she walked, or rather *glided*, by. No one seemed to know her history, or, at all events, it was a subject which was avoided.

But to my story.

Everything had been prepared for the theatricals, which were to take place in a large room, which was then used as the dining-room. A stage had been placed at the further end, and a curtain was hung in readiness. It must be noted that there was a small room which led from the stage, its door being in front of the curtain and within view of everybody. This door was *kept shut*, the room being generally used by the butler to keep glasses, &c., in. At the time it was perfectly empty.

On the afternoon in question, two girls, my sister's eldest daughter and a girl friend, were sitting over the fire. It was a cold, wet afternoon, and though it was late, except for the fire, which was a roaring one in an enormous fireplace, there was no light ; the room was shut up and the candles were not yet lit.

My niece and her friend were talking over the coming theatricals. Nothing could be heard

but their two voices, and the violent rain which was pouring against the window. Suddenly, a rustling sound smote their ears, as if coming from the stage. They looked up ; the curtain, however, remained down. But presently it was gently pushed aside to make room for the entry of a tall, pale-looking lady dressed in green, who held a sort of Egyptian lamp (lit).

The lady took no notice of either of the girls, but, holding the lamp well in front of her, she walked calmly (her long gown "swishing" after her as she went) up to the door, before mentioned, in front of the curtain. She opened it, passed into the room, and closed it noiselessly. My niece was much excited. She sprang to the door, and taking the handle in her hand called out to her companion, "Get a candle quickly ; there is no way out of the room into which she has gone, and it is quite dark." The other girl hurriedly brought a light and ran to the door. They opened it. It was pitch dark—no sign of the Green Lady. To their amazement she had disappeared into space.

Not long after my sister's carriage was heard driving up to the door. The two girls rushed out

to meet her, and told her, "We have seen 'Green Jean!'" My sister knew the effect such a report might have upon the visitors and the servants, and that it might alarm the latter so much as to spoil the arrangements and the pleasures of the evening. She was not the person herself to be alarmed at a ghost, but she feared the effects of such a report upon others, so the story was hushed up.

Not long after my sister, herself, saw the Green Lady. But to relate this, I must state that my sister's sitting-room, in which she always sat and wrote her private letters, *donné*-ed on the sea, into which you could easily throw a stone from the window. The door of this room was at the end of a long gallery, upon which the doors of several rooms opened. The next room to my sister's sitting-room was her son's sitting-room, in which he transacted all business, and that room led into his bedroom. All the doors of these rooms opened on a gallery, which looked out (or used to do so—for I have not been at Wemyss Castle for many years) on to a court-yard with a plot of grass in the middle.

On the evening of the event I am about to

relate, it was, as often is the case in bonnie Scotland, a pouring wet night. My sister's son had been out riding most of the day, and he being at that time rather delicate-chested, his mother was anxious that he should come home.

Suddenly she heard the door-bell ring, and then her son's hasty footsteps into his sitting-room, and thence to his bedroom. Feeling much relieved, and knowing a young man's dislike to espionage, even as regards his health, she waited quietly in her sitting-room. In about half an hour's time, hearing no more, she put her head into his sitting-room, and walked through into his bedroom, which was lit by gas. Seeing that his wet clothes were all lying on the ground she was satisfied, and made good her way out on to the gallery, when, to her surprise, she saw, about twenty yards off, coming towards her along the gallery, a tall lady in green! Although the house was full of guests, my sister could not conceive for a moment who this lady could be, for it was some one she had never seen before.

The lady walked in a slow, dignified fashion, and seemed in no way put out at seeing another person on the gallery. For a moment my sister

stared in astonishment, but in a flash she *felt who it was!*

"It is 'Green Jean,'" she said to herself, "and I shall wait till she comes up to me, and then I shall walk by her side, and see what she will say." She waited. "Green Jean" joined her, *but turned her head away!* My sister moved on by her side, but, as she afterwards told me, she felt *tongue-tied.* The figure accompanied her to the end of the gallery, and then—was gone!

My sister felt, I think, annoyed with herself for not have *done* or *said* something. But when afterwards some one rebuked her for her faint-heartedness, she said truly, "I walked by her the whole length of the gallery, and I don't think there are *many* who would have done *that*—but speak, *I could not.*"

That is the end of the story.

One other small circumstance I recall, also of Castle Wemyss. That, however, happened years before the appearance of the Green Lady.

My sister was going to have a baby. She had been suffering a good deal from many causes, and *one* was that her husband, Hay Wemyss, was in a very bad state of health. His sister, Fanny

Balfour (since dead), told me the story. Poor Millicent had gone to bed, and Hay and his sister were talking about going to London, which they were about to do in a day or two. They were looking out of one of the windows which had a lovely view, and some terraces had lately been built going down towards the sea. The moon was shining brightly, and Hay said to his sister that he felt *very ill.* As they spoke together there was a crash, and part of one of the terraces smashed and fell. He turned to Fanny and said, "I am a dead man! for as a warning to the owner of Wemyss Castle of his early approaching death a piece of masonry always falls!" Fanny tried to laugh him out of the idea, but he would say and hear no more. In a few days they went to London, and Hay Wemyss of Wemyss Castle died a fortnight before his youngest son was born!

L'ENVOI

Now I have finished my reminiscences and my little stories, and I pray my readers to read them indulgently, for I am too old to write any others, and should never have been able to "screw" myself "up to the sticking-point" had it not been for the encouragement I have received from others.

Dear readers! Farewell!

Brighton,
Dec. 31, 1903.

BOOK II

MISCELLANIES

I

TRUE REFINEMENT

And now, having written my recollections of *facts*, I should like, dear readers, to jot down some of my *thoughts* on miscellaneous subjects which have come to me during past years. I am an old woman now, and men and manners have sadly changed since the days I have recorded of my youth. Yet now, as then, it is true that "manners makyth man."

Good manners are the outcome of *true* refinement. I use the word in its highest sense, for this is a subject on which I feel strongly. Few words are so often misunderstood, and therefore misapplied, as those of "vulgarity" and "refinement."

I am not learned enough to trace these words to their root, but from the fact that I so frequently hear different meanings applied to them,

I fancy they have, like many others, insensibly undergone changes of meaning—changes which modify and qualify—till finally they mystify.

Some individuals consider the words "vulgarity" and "indecency" as synonymous; others use the expression "vulgar" when describing the common things of every-day life, such as the vulgar tongue or the "vulgar" (*i.e.*, common) use of a thing; but the "vulgarity" to which I would draw attention, both as to the word and its sentiment, is a something almost indescribable; for although its influence is scarcely felt by some, it is seen at a glance by others—by the so-called *grand monde*—and branded by them with the mark of infamy far more damning in their eyes than many a crying sin; while its opposite, the "refinement," indispensable to an accepted member of that same dread brotherhood, *le grand monde*, is an attribute so shrouded in mystery, so disguised, so exactly, at times, counterfeiting its reverse, that those unhappy persons whose one grand (!) aim in life is to obtain a footing on the mountain heights of fashion are for ever being caught in one or other of these two traps—refined vulgarity or vulgar refinement—so ingeniously covered

by the hidden meshes of society as to be (to them) indiscernible.

How often one hears it said, in high society, "Oh, yes! they are nice, kind, charitable, worthy people; but not 'quite quite'—in fact, second-rate—vulgar, you know!" And you feel you *do* know, although you cannot explain, that there *is* a *je ne sais quoi* about the criticised person; perhaps only an air, an atmosphere, but that the criticism is nevertheless a truth. A truth, yes! But one which I venture to assert is *so often* ungenerously, unfairly, pressed as to become first cousin to a fallacy.

We all know the poet's words:

> A lie which is half a lie is ever the blackest of lies.
> That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
> But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

In like way, a truth which has an alloy of secret falseness in its formation is difficult, very difficult, to combat.

But what about real vulgarity when it is *openly* dressed up, and boldly takes the name and place of refinement? And what about true refinement

when it is *openly* hustled and bustled out of the way and called vulgarity?

Would one not have thought that such a frankly impudent substitution, such an act of candid imposture enacted under our very eyes, would require nought but its own refutation? But, alas! for the gullibility of human nature. Alas! for the length of human nature's nose, for the strength of the leading-strings attached by Dame Fashion to that olfactory organ. For it is sadly and strangely true that, *nolens volens*, we gradually become so used to the truth composed largely of lies, and to the lies composed largely of truth, that at last we cry out lamentably, and in a hopeless state of muddle, "Sirs, which is which?"

We have a theory that no real truth exists but that we may find its counterpart or its suggestion in that blessed book the Bible, the inspiration of which so many clever fools and foolish clever men are nowadays calling in question.

Now, if we honestly search its pages, we shall invariably find a guiding word—one, too, of profoundest common sense—upon the humblest subjects, and we think that in the very matter before

us we may, without pushing the question too far, find some suggestive thoughts. For instance, we are told in the Old Testament of two great emergencies in which choice was made between *men who drank after a certain fashion* and of others who pronounced a given word correctly or the reverse.

Now these two instances prove, at all events without straining the hypothesis too far, that even in those early days the acts of drinking and of pronouncing words did not "go for nothing," and I trust I shall not be considered flippant or irreverent for having mentioned these two facts. To this day, two amongst the greatest tests of vulgarity or refinement in individuals are their methods of feeding themselves and the pronunciation of their words.

How often we come across persons whose eating and drinking are a pain and offence to us, and so utterly objectionable that we prefer turning our eyes away during the process, and would gladly shut them altogether if we dared?

What on earth so discomposing as a man or a woman who, with strong, cruel teeth, munches some hard, *croquant* substance so openly (literally

so at times) and so noisily that not only your eyes—this time—but your ears also are offended, making you long to cork them up ; or, better still, to muzzle your friend—so much more offensively guilty than the poor dogs that *are* muzzled.

Another individual *will* talk with his mouth so distended by food, which for conversational convenience he stows away in some mysterious receptacle which he apparently possesses somewhere inside his cheeks, that he reminds one of some wild beast surprised during its meal, the principal difference in the likeness being that whereas the wild beast would probably run away, the other individual, alas ! doesn't.

Oh ! there are so many objectionable tricks during meals. For instance, how inexcusable are people's different modes of imbibing tea or coffee, with noisy gratification ; generally, too, at breakfast, just at the moment when the best of us feel " short in the temper." Soup, too, at dinner is a most active source of provocation.

I have heard, as no doubt my readers have also, that Lord Byron positively refused to be a party to the transaction when his admiration-of-the-

moment's feeding-time supervened—and I cannot blame him; for many years ago, in Paris, I was dining at the house of an old English couple, Mr. and Mrs. Tudor—dead long ago—who piqued themselves upon collecting celebrities at their board, and did not stop to inquire too closely into the origin of their guests' fame, so long as it was undeniably very *répandu*. During the entertainment I remarked a lady sitting opposite. She was very much "in the sere and yellow leaf," but with the remains of great beauty —a beauty which, of course, was now much patched and mended up. She possessed, however, most lovely teeth — evidently all her own (not by right of purchase)—and she wore white, ill-fitting kid gloves, which she did not remove.

I was first struck (not attracted) by noticing that with her gloved fingers she was pursuing a piece of bread which persistently eluded her grasp, drowning itself in the gravy on her plate.

The crumb was obstinate, the lady more so, and at last she captured the dripping morsel, carrying it to her lips and devouring it with much gusto. Not being over-anxious to behold

the lady's method of cleansing her kid fingers, I turned away.

"Who is that lady?" I asked with a shudder of my next-door neighbour.

"Oh! that is the Contessa ——," was the no less shuddering reply of a young English *attaché*. "She was Byron's great admiration, and oh!" added the young man, "do look at her now!"

I obeyed. She was using her fork—well, not to eat with. And at that moment two great mysteries were solved in my mind: one, why the countess's teeth were so well preserved; and the other, why Lord Byron declined to see his fair enslaver eat.

So much for refinement or the reverse in the methods of eating or drinking.

Now, concerning the pronunciation of words and of certain expressions whereby you know for a fact whether the speaker is a Shibbolethite or a Sibbolethite—*i.e.*, whether or not the *crême de la crême* would dub him "vulgar."

The pronunciation of the word "girl" is a shibboleth—*i.e.*, a test. The higher classes pronounce it as though it were spelt "gairl," whereas

the Sibboleths pronounce it as if it were spelt "gurl," or as it is written—"girl." Another word is "clerk," and there are many others; but I fear to prove wearisome, so I will go on to certain expressions which unmistakably proclaim themselves.

For instance, you meet a happy prospective bride or bridegroom who rushes up to you and informs you with beaming eyes that he or she is "going to *get* married," instead of "going to *be* married." These words are a great test, and nothing amazes one so much as the frequent recurrence of this hateful expression in novels, written by authors who ought to know better, and whose English is generally irreproachable.

Then what more grating to one's feelings than to hear of people "riding in their carriages," instead of "driving"; calling articles of food "beautiful"—"beautiful beef," "beautiful tea," or "a beautiful cook," &c. &c.

These and hosts of other expressions are understood by Shibbolethites, but are a mystery to Sibbolethites and foreigners.

Now these signs of Sibbolethism the *crême de la crême* call "vulgar," and they certainly are

"second-rate." But we venture to think that in these matters fashion strains at gnats and swallows camels, and that there are many worse vulgarities than these before-mentioned ones, which are tolerated, encouraged, and finally accepted.

For instance, what more detestable, more coarsely vulgar, than the jargon of the present day called "slang" indulged in by women and girls of all classes? What is more hurtful to the English language, and to every sense of reverence and refinement? What about that hateful word "ripping," *opening up*, as it does, such unpleasant, disgusting thoughts?

Then the word "awful." I scarcely have the patience necessary to remind the silly women, who can hardly open their mouths without using it, how the expression is utilised in Holy Writ. "Awful is His name." And yet I hear people, calling themselves "ladies" (who *are* ladies, too), gabbling about a thing being "awfully jolly," or "an awfully nice little chap!" &c. &c. Oh! what can we say to the prostitution of such a word?

I confess to being old-fashioned, and when I

hear the conversation around me, abounding in words that I do not even understand, I am proud of being so. And I strive to protect those young ones nearest and dearest to me from the infection of such a plague; and oh! the difficulty of it; for after some minutes of, as I think, exhaustive reasoning with them, telling them that "slang is un-English," incompatible with true refinement or womanly dignity, &c., I end by saying *most* impressively, "*Besides, it is so awfully snobbish!*" thus discovering, to my horror, that I myself have caught the disease! Is slang, then, not "vulgar"? I ask. "No!" I am boldly told; "it is the fashion!"

Then I groan a helpless, obsolete groan, and whisper, "Oh! that over-bearing monster—Fashion!"

Once more, what is more painful to one's feelings of womanly respect than the sight of the manly young women one meets, with their shirts, ties, pins, waistcoats, covert-coats, and those flat abominations they wear on their heads made of some deer-stalking, home-spun material? Is not that "vulgar"? And yet these do not seem to be the individuals the world considers so.

Who, then, *are* the really "vulgar"? Is it that red-faced, fat, ill-dressed, second-rate-looking female of rather noisy exterior? The world would say "Yes." I say "No," for she has no "swagger" about her, is neither self-asserting nor self-conscious; besides, I heard her accost a man (?) who was ill-using his patient, over-worked, crooked-legged horse, asking him, "Did he know how brutally he was taking advantage of a creature totally at his mercy, dumb, too, and unable to testify to his inhumanity, except by the wheals made by the cruel whip upon its poor back and panting sides?" And "Did he remember that that unfortunate beast was a trust he would have to answer for to the merciful Giver of Life to all?"

No! that woman is *not* really "vulgar," for she has a chivalrous nature, and thoroughly understands the delicacy of feeling of Him who forbade both the "seething of a kid in its mother's milk, and that the oxen should be muzzled that were treading out the corn."

The "vulgarity" that that woman presents to the shuddering world is superficial; her heart is gold—at present! for wait—and alas! in a little

you may find her (or some one like her) very different to what she originally was, for by some stroke of fortune she has become enormously rich; she rises in the world, buys a "place" at a convenient distance from London, with a large garden, may be full of wonderful fruit, or with some hitherto unheard-of tree or flower—I remember a green rose once which "did it!"—which the *grand monde* rushes to see! The visitors are impressed by the luxury of the house and general establishment of their hitherto obscure host, telling of *heaps* of money. Little by little our fat friend is first tolerated in society, then eagerly "received" and probably "presented"; her head is weak and gets turned; she loses her simple nature (her only real charm), becomes ashamed of her antecedents, hatches a pedigree instead of (*vice versâ à l'ordinaire*) the pedigree hatching *her!* And now she is really "vulgar."

She now takes a house in London, gives great dinners where things are eaten and drunk that she never heard of before. Now her "vulgarity" is good-naturedly laughed at, her pronunciation called "quaint." All the great world comes to

her balls and parties; then, one day, there is a smash! Her husband (who has not perhaps enjoyed the change as much as she has, but has every now and then, rubbed his head irritably, and ditto his nose, telling his wife she is "spending a power of money") informs her with a pale face that they are ruined, or nearly so; that they must return from whence they came—to obscurity! They do so, but she never returns to what she was before. Her innocent natural nature is gone. And oh! how difficult it is to settle down again into a nobody!

And how many of her great friends will follow —stick to her in her poverty, and try to comfort her?

Thank God, some do. Some never forget, and are grateful for the pleasures she once provided for them.

But, once more, let me try to answer the question, Who are the *really* "vulgar"?

Is it the obscure pale governess who grinds out knowledge all the weary day, refusing herself all hard-earned comforts for the sake of the sick mother at home? Or, is it her employer, who considers Miss Watson good enough to teach and

guide her children, but not good enough to be her own friend? Or, on the other hand, is it the governess who refuses to carry a weary child's doll or hoop, for fear she should "be taken for a nurse"?

But a truce to all these real and wretched vulgarities. Let me state briefly what, in my opinion, a true lady is, or is not.

She is never self-asserting, never remarkable, unless God should have bestowed great beauty upon her, which, of course, cannot be hid.

One of her principal characteristics is tenderness and sensitiveness for the feelings of others. She has intuitive tact, eyes to see all, and eye-lids, when necessary, to see nothing. She is slow to put herself forward, but ready, when called upon, boldly to protest against evil; hating the sin, she is full of mercy and loving pity for the sinners, never ashamed of associating with them or with (what the world hates more) the vulgar, if she can do them good, for she remembers she might have been either, or both, herself.

She is perfectly satisfied to do her best exactly in the position in which God has placed her, be it humble or the reverse, never striving to get

socially higher. She is never ashamed of an unfashionable friend, or a poor relation, being as courteous and scrupulously the same everywhere and everywhen. She cares nothing for the sneer nor for the mocking smile of "the world" when she kisses an ill-dressed, gawky, frightened girl, or when she gives a hearty welcome to Mr. and Mrs. Snooks from the country, who toddle into her pretty drawing-room, *arm-in-arm*, and who are innocently delighted to see her, and not a whit more ashamed at being Snooks than she is of being Lady ——.

Ah! alas and alas for old England!

Why are there so many Radicals, Socialists, &c. Is it all from political differences, or is it also that the rich and great have not sufficiently studied tolerance and good-fellowship with the less well-born, less well-bred than themselves? Have they sufficiently "condescended to the men of low estate," as the Bible commands, or have they put the condescension offensively forward?

Why not follow the gentle footsteps of the highest lady in the land?

Or, go higher still. Who was "meek and lowly"? Who marks each sparrow that falls?

Who neither strove nor cried, nor let His voice be heard in the streets? Who loved and wept with Mary and Martha? Who dined with publicans and sinners? Who took little children in His arms? And when He did all these things was He a whit the less "The King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords?"

II

THE SERVANT QUESTION

Such mistress
  Such Nan,
Such master
  Such man.
    J. Jusser, 1515–1580.

I would fain write down next a few thoughts upon a subject which nowadays comes often to the fore—a subject also upon which greatly depend the happiness and comfort of home. I allude to the question of the rights and wrongs of masters and servants, and of their generally strained attitude towards one another, and I use the word "attitude" advisedly, for I cannot but believe that in many instances beneath the said "attitude" much more kindliness lurks than is visible.

I begin by assuring my readers that I wish to write very humbly, and by no means would I venture to "lay down the law" offensively, being

quite aware that my view of the subject will probably appear to others too highly coloured, and even tinged with an element of absurdity ; but all the same, and although I may be laying myself open to the ridicule of those who disagree with me, I beg them to have a little patience with me and my opinions, and not to condemn me and them unheard. I would also exonerate myself from the charge of wishing to "preach" ; that is not my object. I would only seek to persuade my readers that my notion as to how to govern a household—Utopian as it may appear—would, if feasible, "cut both ways," by not only raising the tone of service, but by also ensuring that service being better rendered.

At present I have only taken one side of the question—*i.e.*, the duty of masters to their servants—and I hope, ere long, to say something upon the duties of servants to their masters, and I humbly trust that I may not, before I have finished, in consequence of my clumsy treatment of the subject, force my readers to the conclusion (as regards both masters and servants) arrived at by Lord Byron, under different circumstances of course, when he used those pregnant words :

Miscellanies

Arcades ambo
id est
Blackguards both !

To begin, then, upon the master's duties to his servants.

In what do they consist ?

It seems to me that the answer to this question lies in the traditional nutshell, which, however, has become so hardened by custom, fashion, and time, that it is a very tough one to crack, for the said nutshell is called "religion"; but *true heart-religion*, in contradistinction to that worldly imitation of it, which, though eminently respectable and even right *as far as it goes* (and how much worse things would be without it !), cannot get far enough to pierce the nut, within which lie curled up some most valuable mottoes, such as, "Let brotherly love continue," and "Be ye kindly affectioned one towards another, with brotherly love," &c., *ad libitum*. After all, we *are* all brothers ! (In some families, however, this might not be a recommendation.) We have all the same hopes, fears, difficulties, joys, sorrows, and relationships, be we masters or servants. I do not, however, say this in a democratic spirit, for no one

holds more firmly than I that distinctions in position are God's making and must hold good; but I also remember that the Lord Jesus left His kingdom above, and "took upon Him the form of a servant," thus for ever consecrating and hallowing both service and a dependent position.

All our households are undoubtedly supposed to be "Christian," are they not? But unfortunately that designation has had some other meanings besides its original one tacked on to it. For instance, I heard not long since of a very smart lady having been highly provoked by one of her footmen, who had (very wrongly, as he had thereby neglected a duty) omitted to powder his head till too late in the day. The lady was very indignant and was heard to say, "Really, that man is not like a Christian, for he doesn't know what's what. *Did* you see him appearing as he did when Lady So-and-So called? *His* head was brown, while all the others were white." In this case the word "Christian" stood for "civilised" or "smart."

Another meaning to the word, with which I have more sympathy, although it generally stirs up an indignant and contemptuous enmity in the

hearts of those who hear it, is when "a Christian family" is spoken of. These words seem at once to conjure up in everybody's mind a family of big bonnets, pale faces, and ill-made gowns—a family of depressed-looking individuals who "think everything is wrong" (so people say), who sing hymns all day, and read and distribute tracts. *This* is the normal idea of a "Christian family," but neither this meaning nor the former one in the least explain *my* reading of the word "Christian," for when I use it, I have in mind *a principle—an atmosphere*—which should pervade the household and prevail in the heart of the master towards his dependants. This kindly feeling is, however, alas! not generally acknowledged or even thought of, excepting sometimes in isolated cases of very old servants or retainers in the family; it is not dealt out, as it should be, to the servants *en bloc*—it would be considered supererogatory and far too sentimental. But, all the same, I would venture to suggest that "supposing and supposing," as the children say, for the sake of argument, that this sort of Christianity were feasible, would it not be something gained on both sides if the master and the servants, though still retaining their relative

positions, should bear one another a living affection, which would naturally engender a community of interest? Of course, after all these many years of custom's and fashion's rule there would be difficulties in working out the system, and indeed *it could not be done* unless this *spiritual* "heart-religion" of which I speak were the active agent—unless, in fact, the masters and those dependent on them "love one another."

See what the sweet, musical Scotch poet says:

> In peace Love tunes the shepherd's reed,
> In war he mounts the warrior's steed,
> In halls in gay attire is seen,
> In hamlets dances on the green.
> Love rules the Court, the camp, the grove,
> And men below, and saints above,
> For Love is Heaven, and Heaven is—Love.
>
> WALTER SCOTT'S "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

From my youth up I was taught by a beloved and noble-minded Mother that our servants never become less loyal to their duty in consequence of their being treated "as though they were flesh and blood like ourselves." "Show your servants," she would say, "that you care for them *outside their service.* Constitute yourself their kind friend in their troubles, and their sympathiser in

their joys, and you won't get your china more broken or your confidence more abused." Of course there are black sheep everywhere, but they are not more likely to whiten themselves because they are kindly treated.

"Do you ever think," my Mother used to say, "how hard it must be to be *working for others every day and all day long?*"

And again I can hear her say, "You know, my dear, that servants dare to have fathers and mothers and relations as *we* have, and these relations of theirs occasionally dare to be ill as ours do; and even at times they have the impudence to die. Again, my pretty maid actually has a lover—as I had once—and where's the harm? I'll tell you. It is when the rules of the house prevent her meeting him, and she runs surreptitiously round the corner to see him. That's how the mischief generally begins. Manage right and fair times for them to meet openly and respectably. Judicious kindness, my dear, is the pivot upon which home comfort turns, and without it your servants will serve you without any interest, except that which they get from the tradesmen."

So much for my dear Mother's logic.

But now let us take a step higher. Let us turn on the searchlight of that old-fashioned but blessed book of "wisdom which cometh from above," the Bible, and let us learn from its plain words, its silences, or its references—all equally teaching to those who care to learn—what it says upon the subject. People have often said to me, "It is little less than blasphemy to suppose God will trouble Himself about such insignificant things as a household, as to whether the meat be fairly weighed, or the butler honest about the wine." But my answer is: "You forget what He says about the sparrow that falls, and about the hairs of your head." Nothing is great, nothing is small to God, and from a child it always gave me a grander idea of Him when I remembered, He is God of the microscope, as well as of the sun, moon and stars (and of those terrible distances the very thought of which turns the astronomer's brain), for He is also the Creator of creatures and things so infinitesimally small that our eyes cannot even discern them. Yet He guides *them*. Oh! be sure if we care for His guidance in our household, He will not refuse it, and we

shall hear His voice. "This is the way, walk ye in it."

It is helpful also, in connection with the duty we owe our servants, and the difficulty of fulfilling it, to remember that one grand lesson is plainly taught about it in the Old Testament. The servants *there*, we are told, used to address their master as "father"; and in the interesting story of Naaman the Leper, we see that his recovery from that dreadful plague was mainly due to the love and anxiety of his servants.

A little maid—a captive, we read—spoke to her mistress; and Naaman's own servants, calling him "father," argued with him when he seemed unwilling to obey the Prophet, and prevailed.

We guess, too, by the narrative that a real, warm affection must have subsisted between these servants and their master; the little maid's expression, "Would to God!" manifests how very near to her heart was the recovery of her master; while Naaman's other servants—men, we have every reason to suppose—being grieved at his apparent unwillingness, from a foolish pride, to act, reasoned with him as sons. He listened and was cured.

Of course we know that nowadays manners are changed, and if the cook were to call his master "father" he would be relegated at once to the mad-house! But, all the same, the teaching we get in the Bible on the matter is that mutual affection is the chord to which our household arrangements should be attuned.

Another few words and I have done. To me a painful proof of the utter insensibility of the generality of masters to the fact that their servants have the feelings common to all men is the astounding want of delicacy often evinced by those who ought to (and *do*) know better in the subjects of conversation chosen and discussed at meals before the servants, of whose presence no account seems taken any more than if they did not exist. The characters that are laughed away, the anecdotes that are repeated—evidently the servants who are present being accounted as nonentities, which in itself must be sufficiently galling; but when it comes, as it often does, to the ridicule, the sneering allusions—and worse—which are often levelled at the very class from which our servants spring, it must be intensely insulting. And I often think what an amount of self-restraint these

servants exercise who stand behind our chairs; probably boiling over with rage, and yet do not ever damage a lady's smart gown or a gentleman's coat by "accidentally" upsetting over them the lobster sauce or champagne cup! I really do not think, if I were in their place, that I should be quite as Christianlike and self-denying! When we think, too, how strong within ourselves is the sense of "class," and how *we* should resent any disparaging allusion to our own, or to our friends, I repeat, I marvel at the few "accidents" which occur during the waiting at dinner!

Surely, surely that high-bred and gentlemanlike delicacy of feeling which we, superiors in position, claim as part of our heritage, should shrink from speaking insultingly or even slightingly of the very class from which our listening servants have sprung. I am aware that many of these social mistakes are blunders, and committed unwittingly, but when we think how anxious we are to suit our conversation to any royal prince, or to any guest with whom we wish to ingratiate ourselves, could we not be equally careful, so as, if possible, to avoid hurting the feelings of those who cannot answer us at the time, and who are

therefore comparatively helpless. And now I really have done.

"And a good thing too!" I hear some one say, "after all the impossibilities and nonsense you have been talking for the last hour! So bad, too, for the servants to hear!"

"Impossibilities," alas! my words may appear at present, but "nonsense," *no!* and if my suggestions could only leave an influence behind them just strong enough to tempt some of my kind-hearted readers to follow the road I have endeavoured to point out—even part of the way—I should be more than content.

III

ON BALLAD-SINGING

Governed by a strain
Of music, audible to him alone.

My object in writing on this subject is twofold. First I would point out one or two reasons why, in my humble opinion, one so rarely comes across satisfactory amateur English ballad-singing ; and, secondly, I would venture a few suggestions to would-be ballad-singers.

I fear I shall not recommend myself when I begin by saying that one of the most common causes of failure in ballad-singing arises from what is, for the moment, an insurmountable difficulty to youthful singers, namely, that when the voice is at its freshest and purest—in fact, when it is *young*—the most requisite quality, called "soul," must of necessity be generally absent (or, at all events, very undeveloped) in

consequence of the performers' inexperience in heart teachings.

A girl's voice may be sweet and true, and the mechanical training be good, but the depths of passionate feeling, indispensable to satisfactory English ballad-singing, are not there, and probably may not come till the voice is many years older.

Another constant reason of failure, but one that is remediable, is the utilising of too much ornamentation, too much *fioritura.* Poor Madame Antoinette Sterling, who has so lately gone to her rest, was an example of what I mean. Oh! if people would only take her simplicity as their model!

I once knew a lady whose ballad-singing was a "household word" (but I have not leave to mention her name), and she one day long ago said to me, "My dear, I haven't a run or a shake in me—and never had!" And I never heard her attempt one; but the beauty and pathos of her ballads were entrancing.

Those privileged individuals who can call to mind Mme. Dolby's singing will remember that although she possessed runs and shakes to any

amount, she rarely utilised them in her English songs, and most certainly her voice and "style" were as near perfection as anything this side the grave.

Some of my readers may remember a lady who made a great stir several (I may say, many) years ago in the *élite* of the London musical world. I allude to Mrs. Murray Gartshore. She was a most satisfactory amateur, and those who ever had the privilege of hearing her sing "Give me back one hour of Scotland," or "Love me if I live, love me if I die," will not have forgotten it.

Her voice was an ample mezzo-soprano, but her deep notes were wonderful, having all the richness and pathos of a real contralto.

She invariably sang without notes, and accompanied herself standing, for she said she could not bring out her voice in a sitting posture.

She was not young when I first saw her, and although far from handsome, there was an expression in her face as she sang which was very remarkable, for one saw that her very soul went out in her music, and that her thoughts were *far away—far beyond* her momentary surroundings.

I recollect once hearing her sing a most touching song, called "Love not" (the words written by the famous Mrs. Norton). It was at a house in Grosvenor Square. I forget who was the hostess, but the drawing-room was crammed, and as the last notes of the sweet voice died away every one was discovered to be in tears. The universal emotion would, probably, have lasted some minutes had not a smothered and sepulchral groan issued from the body of the room, apparently coming from some agitated individual whose face seemed buried in a pocket handkerchief. Then a deep, manly voice uttered these oracular words:

"Her dog! Her dog! Tell her to sing her dog!"

The speaker was old Lady Morley, a lady well known for her sympathetic kindness of heart and for the masculine depth of her tones. The "dog song" for which she craved was a great favourite with Mrs. Gartshore's hearers, but I forget its title. It related most graphically the rescue of a drowning man from the waves by a dog, and on the occasion in question Mrs. Gartshore, with her usual unaffected good-nature,

complied with Lady Morley's loudly expressed wish.

I had never heard the " dog song " before, and I never forgot it.

I listened, I remember, with breathless interest as each word was simply and clearly enunciated, and when,at the conclusion, Mrs. Gartshore's voice joyfully rang out, " He is saved ! He is saved ! " my feelings overcame me to such a degree that I had to be hustled out of the room into a neighbouring apartment to compose myself, for, being somewhat young in years, I cried (as the children call it) " out loud," and created quite a disturbance.

I often heard Mrs. Gartshore sing afterwards, and I do not think she liked me the less for my unconventional *sobs*. Poor lady ! She is dead now ; but I can see her still standing at her pianoforte, weirdly pale, and looking straight before her, as though she saw something unseen by the bystanders.

She had a way also, after concluding a song, of remaining erect and quite still, gazing, as it were, through and beyond the room in which she was, almost as if she were awaiting some long-expected

answer to her plaintive and passionate melodies; and it would be quite two or three moments before she seemed to recollect herself. Then she would turn with a smile to old Lord Lansdowne and sink into a seat.

Lord Lansdowne (grandfather to the present peer) was always to be seen sitting quite close to Mrs. Gartshore's pianoforte when she sang, for he was deaf; and although he was ever regarded as a hard and practical man, I have often seen him belie his character, hanging upon that lady's touching notes with tearful eyes.

To the youthful amateur I would now give a few hints which may prove useful.

Above all things, when you sing, forget yourself, and think only of the music, for *singers for effect* are *unbearable*, and if you wish to please and touch the hearts of your hearers you should sing simply (without notes is best, and accompanying yourself), and as naturally as you speak, both in expression of face and in articulation. All unnatural grimaces, either in the struggle to open your mouth sufficiently or in the anxiety to produce a fascinating (?) expression, must be strenuously avoided. A clear pronunciation, too,

is most important, and *most difficult* in the English language especially, for so many words almost necessitate the closing of the lips, such as "nymph," "lip," "moon," "bridge," "love," &c.; but this difficulty will be obviated by a sensible vocalist—one who has the tact to *ménager* such words. All tricks and affectations must be shunned "as a sailor shuns the rocks," or they will inevitably shipwreck the performer.

Some girls, who would not otherwise sing badly, make themselves thoroughly objectionable through tricks. I will cite one or two cases that have come under my own observation.

I once knew a young girl who, whenever she reached any especial passage to which she wished to impart thrilling emphasis, would twist and turn her body from side to side as though she were in the very extremity of torture—a trick which was inexpressibly aggravating.

Another would put on what, at starting, was an affected smile, but which speedily resolved itself into a painful grin—painful to others, as it evidently was to herself, for it made one's very jaws ache to watch her spasmodic efforts to keep her mouth "in position," seeing that whatever she

chanced to be pouring forth—words of tenderest love, of direst hate, or of agonising jealousy—the grin was ever the same! No; let us have no tricks, no affectations, no grimaces! I was cured of "making faces" by my singing-master, who one day, in the midst of my song, hurriedly placed a mirror before me, and I caught myself looking so excruciatingly absurd, so painfully ugly, that ever afterwards any good or bad looks I possessed (at all events during my vocal efforts) had the merit of being natural.

Sing as you really feel at the moment, and do not "try to feel what you sing," as so many well-meaning teachers conjure you to do. "Feeling" will never come till it does so naturally, and without trying; and do believe me that all *travaillé* feeling is, like some old lady's wig in one of Dickens' inimitable stories, "such a glaring deception that it ceases to be one, and takes nobody in."

Finally, dare I offer one hint (almost amounting to a solemn warning) to some *mature amateurs?* I have humbly endeavoured, as far as my feeble lights shine, to teach young performers *how* to sing; and now my anxiety is to teach

old ones, or nearly old ones, how *not* to sing; for I know no more sorry sight or sound than that of a poor lady with a cracked voice, or one who will not allow that her voice has gone away and left her.

To these aged sufferers, of whom I am one, I would say, kindly but firmly, "Dear Mrs. Vorbei, dear sister, be persuaded by me, and *never sing* publicly again, no, not even *en petite comité*, for your voice is, speaking honestly, cracked—or, at best, very uncertain—and disposed to play heartless pranks upon you; for when you open your mouth to sing, curious husky noises, over which you have *no* control, issue from your lips, distressing your hearers much and yourself more, for they—your hearers (the kind ones)—assure you what you know is false—*i.e.*, that your voice is "as lovely as ever"—while the vulgar herd laughs, not discerning that, to you, those husky sounds are real and literal *larmes dans la voix;* for no one but the sufferer knows the bereavement it is when one's voice is *dead!* No, dear lady, have the courage to confess yourself *passée*, and sing only when you are alone, or perchance with some close friend (if you have one you are not so much to be pitied as

some) who remembers what your voice was once, and who prefers even its sad *ghost*—so suggestive of the past—to the many discords (I speak advisedly) called "music" of the present.

Ah! *Tempo passato, perchè non ritorne!*

IV

A NOBLE LIFE

IN MEMORIAM

Mercy I ask'd,
Mercy I found.
W. Camden.

It has often been a source of surprise and pain to me to notice how quickly, nay, entirely at times, the memory of some good, noble man or woman passes—flits away—and merging into the shadows of the past hardly leaves any impress on the shifting sand-shores of Time! Nay, at times their very names are forgotten, and oh! so soon.

I am not, of course, alluding to "crowned heads," or to "political characters," for they of necessity become landmarks, but I am thinking of humble individuals who, during their sojourn here below, have only been benefactors to their fellow creatures, or, may be, have only devoted

themselves, and all they had, or were, to doing good. Then, some day, I or some equally humble person may start in hopes of finding these individuals, and lo! their homes are there, but they are not!

As I write this, I am especially referring, in my own mind, to a dear, holy, unselfish woman, a Jewess by birth. "Oh!" I hear my readers say. "Yes," I answer; "she was a Jewess, one of God's chosen people, and a Christian as well, and in every sense of the word; indeed, one of God's most holy saints."

I think that one of the greatest privileges of my life has been that she should have used me as a help, and as one of her most beloved friends.

Still, as I remarked above, although she slaved, wept, and died in Brighton not twenty-five years ago, her name of Fanny Murray Vicars is little more *now* than "Solomon's misty cloud, quickly dispersing beneath the beams of the deep noon-day sun."

Mrs. Vicars has been dead many years. She was the head and the sole originator of that touching institution, "The Brighton Home for Female Penitents."

She was the daughter (there were several) of a well-known and respected rabbi. He was a rich and a good man, but was never converted to Christianity. He loved his daughter Fanny, and left her a large sum of money, which she gave up entirely to Christ and her Christian work, as far as was in her power, for of course her change of faith made great difficulties. In the end, however, Fanny was the means of converting her mother and all the rest of her family to Christianity. She was also the happy means of bringing the work she loved so well before our dear Queen Victoria's excellent daughter, the late Duchess Alice of Hesse, whose great wish was to build a Home on the same principles at Darmstadt. But of this hereafter.

No one, after seeing Mrs. Vicars, could ever forget her. She was very far from handsome. Her type was very Jewish. She had dark, sparkling eyes, dark hair, and beautiful hands and feet. Her manner was winning in the extreme. Her voice was eager, and attuned to the touching minor tones of sympathy. She had a great sense of the ridiculous, and an infectious laugh, which made its way (probably *à dessein*) into the very

hearts of the poor penitents, filling them for the moment with cheerfulness, and for the moment casting out the brooding demon of utter, hopeless condemnation that so often (Mrs. Vicars told me) embitters *that especial class of sinner more than any other, delivering them over to that gloom of despair*, that real "darkness that may be felt."

As Mrs. Vicars dilated upon the interest of her work one literally forgot its unsavouriness, and one only remembered that *here* was a woman held up by angels—the angels of mercy, pity, and forgiveness. But, all the same, at times I knew her well enough to be aware of and to appreciate fully her struggle to sustain the cheerful front she invariably presented to strangers.

"My dear," she said, "you see my poor girls' love for me and for the Home. Well, if I were not to call this their home and me their mother we could not get on. For, oh! the difficulties of the different girls! They are not the machines they appear—no more am I! Look at their want of education—that is *bad;* but look again at some of them who have education—*that is worse!* Some of them are grossly ignorant and idiotic; the others have had evil and gross educations

which to them have become second natures. But, dear friend, I can get over *that* sometimes, but what I suffer from is the devil of *disbelief* that whispers in my ear that my health is going, that I shall soon die. And then look at my *lost time!* What will become of my girls?—of my work?—the Home, &c.? Yes, that I must die like every one else, and *perhaps sooner;* that then a stepmother will take my place in the form of *a committee;* in fact, 'a king will arise that knows not Joseph'—*i.e.*, the girls. But then," I remember she said to me, "I feel I am low, mean, contemptible, and I call out to the devil, 'Get out! No love-work done for Christ can fail!' and then, my dear, I get better!"

Oh! how her words reverberated in my ears years after, when I went with a lady to see the Home under its "stepmother," the committee. Kind and stately matrons were there to receive me—to "show me over"; but—they "knew not Joseph." I felt impelled—bad taste, no doubt—to mention my dear friend's name. My words were received with civil, gentle surprise; but one kind lady said, "Oh, yes, I remember the name now. She it was who began the work."

Oh! indeed she did, and often she told me *how* she began the work, and a true miracle it seemed to me.

I am afraid I may have put off till too long the story I have to tell of Mrs. Vicars, so I will set to work at once.

Mrs. Murray Vicars' unmarried name was Phillips. Her father was, as I said before, a well-known, respected, and rich rabbi. He had a large family. My dear friend was born in 1817; she, therefore, was thirteen years older than myself. Mr. Phillips was a good Jew and a good man, and my dear friend used to say proudly that she could never call to mind her father having said or done anything contrary to his belief in the Old Testament. Of course, he "knew not Christ," but he was most particular in his religion, and kept a little Christian maid to perform necessary household functions on the Sabbath, which would not be permitted to a Jew. This same little maid was the destined means of Mrs. Vicars' conversion. It occurred thus. This beloved father and husband, so respected by his family as the one being on earth who never did a wrong thing, was taken very ill in London.

I know not how long he was laid up, but one day his poor wife came from London to Hampstead, where a country house had been taken for the children, and they having been told that their father was hopelessly ill—in fact, dying—their mother also added that whenever the children were sent for, for him to see them, they were on no account to tell him how ill he was, as the doctors said "such a fright might kill him." The poor lady was in the deepest grief, and soon left the children again, in order to return to her dying husband.

When the mother had gone back to London, Fanny and her sister Eve kept whispering together, and Fanny said, "I cannot see why my good father should not be told he is dying; we all know what a good man he is, so why should he be afraid to die? All good Christians are not afraid." She thought long and anxiously over this question, and then at last she exclaimed, "I know what I shall do; I shall get the Christian maid to procure me a New Testament, and we can look it over privately, and find out why the Christians don't fear death." So she and her sister Eve coaxed the maid, and after some

difficulty got her to lend them the coveted book. "And then," Mrs. Vicars added as she told me, "we went out into the fields, sat ourselves down under a hedge, and opened the prohibited volume." Mrs. Vicars continued, "We read eagerly and long, and when we came to compare the New Testament accounts of the Lord's birth and death with the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and other parts of the Old Testament, our eyes were instantaneously opened, and we then and there believed! A veil seemed torn from our eyes, and we saw Jesus! Like the jailor of Philippi, our conversion, I repeat, was sudden and instantaneous. We rose from our seats and entered the house new creatures—Christians!"

After this event, however, Fanny was not happy, for with that fine, open, generous nature which afterwards so distinguished her, she felt she must "confess Christ," and not be ashamed of One who had gone through such suffering and had died for her sake. Still, as was but natural, she feared the consequences which she knew must inevitably follow. And besides, how was she to make her confession?

The opportunity was given her sooner than

she expected. Her father died. He had been a wealthy man, as well as a good and justly respected one, and all his friends of his own faith, as well as many outside acquaintances, were anxious to hear how he had disposed of his money. They were not left long in doubt, for a week or so after his decease it was considered necessary that his widow and two daughters should (for the purpose of identification) make their appearance in a court of law. (I apologise if my legal terms are not as correct as they should be. But I am relating all this from memory, and fear my expressions may be faulty, although they are, as far as I can remember, true, and strictly according to Mrs. Vicars' own narrative.) The carriage was accordingly ordered one day, and the mother and daughters repaired to the court. When they arrived they had to wait a little, as another case was in hearing, and during those few minutes, Fanny, who had never before seen anything of the kind, was deeply interested. She noticed also, with a quickening pulse, that when the witnesses were sworn a different book was presented to the Christians to that upon which the Jewish witnesses took their oath, and intuitively

she comprehended. "The Old and the New Testaments," she whispered to herself. "And now's my time. For the court being packed with Jews my confession of Christ will be thorough. And I *will* confess Him, come what may!"

Fanny's mother was sworn, and the individual who held the book approached the girl.

"I felt rather faint," she told me, "but when I heard him desire me to swear to 'the truth—all the truth—and nothing but the truth,' I braced myself up and proudly put out my hand, and while pushing the Old Testament aside, I said loudly, so that all present should hear, 'Give me the New Testament, *for I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!*'"

In repeating this story, she declared that as she spoke an electric shock seemed to strike through the assembled crowd, and a terrible scene of anger and confusion ensued, which so terrified the girl that she never could quite call to mind what really took place. The assembled Jews called her "an apostate," and were so disposed to be violent that the police had to be called in, and they rescued her by force, but not before

her clothes were torn and she, personally, had been roughly handled.

"I got home somehow," she said, "I never quite knew how; but afterwards they expelled me from home, and my family *mourned for me for a year*, as being dead to them." Mrs. Vicars never cared to dilate much on this part of her history, and, of course, I could not press her. But she always rejoiced over the fact that afterwards, through God's great mercy, all, or at all events the most part, of her family became Christians also. She herself was baptized at Christ Church, Maida Hill, by the Rev. Daniel Moore in 1841. She became one of that gentleman's district visitors, and taught in his Sunday school. In the year 1844 she married the Rev. Murray Vicars, and went out with him to Bagdad on missionary work, where her husband's labours were blessed, being, no doubt, helped on by his energetic and warm-hearted wife.

The Rev. Murray Vicars died in 1851, and his widow lived for some time afterwards with a sister of hers; then she proceeded to Brighton on a visit, to see a friend who lived there in delicate health, and it was at her house that she first met

the Rev. G. Wagner, cousin to the much respected Arthur Wagner, but diametrically opposite to him in his religious views. It was some years after all this that the great blessing and benefit of Mrs. Vicars' friendship was bestowed upon me. She was now almost a middle-aged, though wonderfully active, woman, upon whose serious face one could trace the indelible lines of anxiety and care. But her personal charm was great ; she had a kindly voice and tender dark eyes (so quick to see, and yet with such quick readiness to "use her eyelids," when necessary, instead of her eyes). This expression I often quote, having originally heard it from the late Rev. J. Vaughan.

As I write, the dear lady's whole personality comes up before me so vividly, and I feel now, as I used to do then, no surprise at the wonderful influence she wielded over all those whom she wished to propitiate. Then there was her gentle laugh (which I mentioned before), so "infectious," and which she knew so well how to use. I remember her once saying to me, "My dear, God in His loving-kindness has bestowed upon me a very strong sense of the ridiculous, and no one knows how this gift (for I can call it nothing

short of a 'gift' in my case) has often and often helped the 'lame dog over the stile.'"

I must now, however, relate, in *as nearly her own words as possible*, what was the beginning of that "Home" which flourished under her care for so many years, becoming a blessing to wretched outcasts, who would without it have probably "gone under" both here and hereafter. She and I were sitting together one day, and she said, "Did I ever tell you what was the beginning of the 'Home'? No? Well listen. I was one day feeling very depressed, thinking of my husband, and the words sprang up in my mind, 'No man careth for my soul,' and I began to weep. 'This won't do,' I thought, 'I will go out to change my thoughts.' I must tell you that at that time I used to take long, solitary evening walks, never noticing much where I went or whom I met.

"Well, this night I found myself seated on a seat on the beach, on that part of the esplanade nearest the sea. I liked hearing the waves, and also the solitude of the place, which was very different *then* to what it is now. There were no bright lamps then, and it was a very dark misty

night. The place, I afterwards found out, was invariably haunted by the very lowest of the low class of both men and women after a certain hour. In my sad mood, however, I did not notice this, but I sat on, only listening to the waves.

"Soon, however, in the 'near distance,' I made out three figures coming towards where I was sitting—two men and a woman. They evidently did not see me, as I was dressed in black and was sitting on the dark bench, no doubt enveloped entirely in the mist. The men were speaking, and as far as I could see they looked like two working men, while the woman was unmistakably one of those unfortunates whose very existence some people think should be ignored. The night was still, their voices loud, so that I was forced, though unwillingly, to hear their foul conversation, and, trembling and disgusted, I became the witness to a shameful bargain, struck between the woman and one of the men.

"I listened a moment longer, as they still had not seen me, and then my mind was made up.

"I rose quietly from the seat, and approaching the poor woman, who seemed much startled at my appearance, I put my hand on her arm, '*You*

are never going to sell your soul?' I said to her. Recovering herself, the woman answered quickly and almost savagely, 'And what if you are starving?'

"'For God's blessed sake come home with me,' I said. 'I will give you a supper and a bed.' The woman demurred and seemed frightened—long afterwards she told me she thought I was a spirit appearing to her through the mist—while the men began to be abusive and violent, but taking no notice of *them*, I held on to the woman's arm. 'Oh! do come!' I said, 'for God Almighty's sake!' And she did come. I took her to my lodgings, and after feeding her I got her to tell me her story. It was, alas! a very common one, beginning in folly and ending in sin; then came the constant fall, lower and lower, until finally she landed in the very abyss of degradation and starvation.

"'Stay with me to-night,' I pleaded with her, and I gave her my own bed, which seemed to touch her more than anything, lying myself on a mattress on the floor. I kept her in all the next day—would not let her go out. I dressed her in some of my own clothes, and sent for my kind

friend the Rev. George Wagner to come and speak to her. He argued with her gently and lovingly, and finally got her to promise to stay for a while and do some work for me in the house. I kept her with me for some days and nights, and finally, to make a long story short, her heart became touched, and she *so* penitent, *so* active in the housework, that I made her my waiting-maid. God had blessed the means and the words of Mr. Wagner, and she became amenable and deeply impressed by God's love for her—a sinner—and still further with the fact that He would not forsake or scorn her as the world would do.

"I kept her thus for a few weeks; and one day she came to me and said, 'Did not I think that as God had permitted *her* to be rescued, she ought to go out of a night and try to bring in other poor women, her companions in sin?' She did so, and I went with her. Some of the women laughed at me and at her, some insulted us, but three or four hearkened and came with us. So I had to take a room for them, *and that was the beginning of the Home.*

"The woman who was first rescued worked faithfully with me for years; became one of my

most trusted matrons at the Home, and died there, having been the means of good to many miserable desperate women."

For years Mrs. Vicars worked indefatigably, and her whole life was one of self-sacrifice in every particular; but, to my mind, the greatest instance of her self-abnegation, and one that should not pass unrecorded, was, that the good clergyman who helped her in her arduous work, who stood by her day by day, an appreciative witness of her constant and unselfish devotion to the poor castaways—a devotion only second to her love for the Redeemer—became deeply attached to her and asked her to be his wife. He loved her, and she most truly loved him, and at first gave her happy consent. "But," she said to me while relating this part of the story, "upon mature reflection, I saw clearly that if I were to become a wife, I should no longer work as completely for my girls and with that single eye which heretofore had guided me. No! I should naturally care to please my husband. I should probably have children, and then where would be my girls? 'No,' I said to myself, 'I must give this happiness up also, I must give up *all* to God, and "my girls" must

have all I have—and am; the sacrifice must be entire!'"

Mrs. Vicars never told me how Mr. Wagner took her decision; he must, anyhow, have gone on respecting and loving her all the more, for to his dying day he went on working for and with her, and there never seemed to have been a hitch between this man and woman, who gave up all, as their Master had done, to save sinners. After once relating it, Mrs. Vicars never mentioned this episode to me again, and after Mr. Wagner's death, which took place abroad, to her great grief, she worked on for years alone. Then it pleased God to weaken her sight. I had the privilege, for some months, of writing her letters, and many were the interesting and extraordinary stories I heard from her lips, although she never in any instance gave up a single name.

One morning I remember meeting her on the esplanade, in a bath chair, a form of locomotion which she was forced to adopt in consequence of her failing sight and of, alas! her general health. She seemed depressed, and told me that the "Home" expenses were unusually large, and had, of course, to be met; and she added, "she really

did not know where the money would come from," but that it *would* come, she never really doubted for one moment! Still, I had never seen her so despondent before, and it worried me greatly to hear her ejaculating, "My girls! my poor girls!" Suddenly she checked herself. "I am wrong," she said, "for God has the money, if He sees fit to give it to me." Then she told me the sum she required—a very large one (some hundreds); and when she mentioned it to me as "—— hundreds," she added comically, "and three and fourpence! and where *is* the three and fourpence to come from? I don't know, do you?" She laughed, although evidently ill at ease, and I had, unfortunately, to leave her then; but the next day I went out again and met her at the same spot. She was looking radiant.

"I've got it!" she exclaimed.

"Got *what?*" I said stupidly.

"Why, the three and fourpence of course! And where from, do you suppose? Why—from *China*, and from a man I don't know, and that I never heard of!"

China, in those days, was not *next door* (!) as it almost appears to be now. At *that* time it was a

land of mystery ; and that any money, for "Mrs. Vicars' Home," should have come from *China* seemed little less than miraculous. She told me "a good man in China" had come across a small book entitled "Work Among the Lost"—been deeply interested in it, and had felt impelled to send her almost the exact sum she had been pining for.

(This book had been compiled from Mrs. Vicars' own notes, and published by a lady, once a great friend. It was, however, afterwards withdrawn.)

In talking over this happy experience of obtaining the money from China, Mrs. Vicars said to me, "Ah! I did not deserve such a mark of love, for in my anxiety I had almost doubted God's will to save; and it is not the first time, after all, I had been helped in an extremity!"

The great difficulty Mrs. Vicars had often to contend against was that of "getting at" some of the wretched young girls, whose relations would come to her for help, to get their daughter, or their sister, out of the horrible haunts and dens of sin, always open to receive unwary girls, and in which the inmates were

quite as securely confined as were ever convicts in a prison. When Mrs. Vicars went on these quests she went alone; and she invariably refused (when urged, and even warned to do so) to take a policeman with her. "No! no!" she would say, "that would make them look upon me at once as an enemy!" and many were the escapes she had from real danger—such as being roughly handled and "hustled."

She related to me one most touchingly interesting instance, and because it had a happy ending I must set it down here.

One of the girls, who had been for some time an inmate of the Home, and who was considered a most hopeful case, being in very delicate health and very attentive to the religious teaching she received—ran away! She had climbed over the wall, taking with her, of course, all her nice "Home" clothes. This was a terrible blow to Mrs. Vicars, one which very rarely (although it had now and then occurred before) befell her. The girl kept away for some time, and Mrs. Vicars began to fear the runaway would never be heard of again. Unlike most establishments (I believe) of the kind, Mrs. Vicars used to receive runaways

back once or even twice, if she considered it a hopeful case. One day, however, a penitent letter arrived from the wretched unfortunate, giving her address, saying she was staying at one of the dens of infamy in the town, but that she *must* see Mrs. Vicars as she was dying. She gave her address, and said that the "mother" (!) refused to let her write to Mrs. Vicars or leave the house in which she was staying, that her shoes and clothes had been taken away from her (she being in bed), and that thus she was prevented from going back to the Home! She added that she had coaxed one of the girls to post her letter to Mrs. Vicars, although she had no stamp. She ended by writing, "Oh! pray—pray come!"

Mrs. Vicars instantly started, and getting somewhere near the address (which she did not know), she entered a small "general" shop, and seeing a man behind the counter, asked him if he could guide her, giving him the written address.

The man stared, first at the paper, then at Mrs. Vicars, and said finally:

"You are never going *there*, madam, and alone?"

Mrs. Vicars answered that such *was* her

intention, and that, moreover, no time was to be lost.

"Then, madam," the man answered, "I guess who *you* are."

"Then," answered Mrs. Vicars, "if you really *are* a friend, let us, first of all, pray about it, that God will bless my undertaking, and that I may find the child."

They did so, both kneeling down in an inner room, and then she started, following the shopman's directions.

It was up a court, or rather many courts and narrow streets, and many astonished-looking men and women stood at their doors looking at the strange lady as she passed, but offering no insults. When she came to the door she was seeking, she knocked and rang, and a rather alarming-looking man appeared in answer, and asked what she wanted.

"May I see the lady of the house?" Mrs. Vicars said. Her heart beat fast, but she showed no fear; although the man's manner was by no means reassuring. He led her into a small but tidy room on the ground floor, and then he asked her name.

She did not give it, feeling convinced that had she done so—her name was so well known—she would have been turned away. So she said, "If you will call the lady of the house I will give *her* my name at once." The man then began to swear, and said she came from the police.

Mrs. Vicars assured him calmly but firmly that she had nothing to do with the police or with any one of the kind, but that a friend of hers was lodging in the house who was very ill, and that she was anxious to see her.

The man looked very sulky but left the room, and Mrs. Vicars heard him call out, "Mother, you're wanted."

Then there was an answer in a woman's voice, and a short, whispered conversation.

Mrs. Vicars meantime looked about the room, taking in everything she saw, and then a middle-aged woman appeared in the doorway, and asked her visitor brusquely her name and what she wanted.

Mrs. Vicars gave her name (which the woman knew of course), and added, "You have a sick girl here called M—— J——. May I see her? She lived for some time with me. Is she very ill?"

"Too ill to be bothered by you," the woman answered roughly, at the same time opening the door widely, and pointing to the way out of the house.

Mrs. Vicars took no notice of the rudeness of the woman's words, nor to her gestures, but said gently, "Ah, don't be cross. I do so wish to see the girl." Then looking around the room she said pleasantly, "You have a nice little sitting-room here and quite a library. May I sit down for a moment and look at your books, for I have had a long walk?"

The woman gave a surly, unwilling consent, and then after a few minutes said, "And now ma'am, you must go, for I am very busy."

But Mrs. Vicars still looked at the books, asking —imploring—God to teach her what to do. Then she said, "Do let me see that poor child? I assure you if you will let me do so, I will go away if you still wish it."

The woman looked irresolute, and Mrs. Vicars suddenly exclaimed, pointing to a shelf, "What a beautiful Bible I see there, and I am sure it is an old and valuable one. Will you let me see it?"

The woman looked pleased and off her guard.

"Ah! she said, "that was my mother's Bible, and *her* mother's before that. She gave it me when—when—I left home."

She took the book down, and dusting it, gave it into Mrs. Vicars' hand, who opened it purposely at Isaiah i. 18, and read out distinctly the words: "Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

The woman began to fidget—to seem uncomfortable—as Mrs. Vicars went on; then suddenly Mrs. Vicars said, "Where *is* your mother?"

"She is dead, ma'am, worse luck!"

"Ah! poor thing!"

"But *she* was a good woman," said the landlady fiercely, on the defensive, and little heeding the almost confession of her own sin, which the emphasis in these words implied.

"Ah! were you with her at the time she died?"

The woman burst into tears, and sobbed out, "No, I was not. She lived miles and miles away, in a farmhouse in ——shire, and I *dared* not go to see her! It had been my home."

"Poor, poor thing. And did you wish very much to see her?"

"I did, and I heard after that she wished much to see me—and I never went."

Then Mrs. Vicars put her arm round the woman's shoulders and said, "*What* a sorrow for her—when she was dying too! Well, that poor girl upstairs looks on *me* as her mother, and wants to see me. Would you have it on your conscience to give *her* that pain? Come, let me go up."

This time the woman did not refuse, but took the visitor upstairs, and I think she told me afterwards she had little or no further opposition from the man. The girl was wrapped up in a blanket and carried back to the Home, where she eventually died peacefully and repentantly. But the story did not end here. The landlady, at first so fierce and defiant, became softened. She gave up her wicked ways, her wicked house, and ended by being a religious and respected woman.

Mrs. Vicars told me innumerable and touching anecdotes of this kind, but of course such exciting work was very fatiguing both to mind and body, and in time wore her out. Her mind, however, remained vigorous almost to the end, and for a long time so did her body. She worked up to the

last; but all things wear out! When she could no longer walk, she drove and wrote, and when her eyes became bad she got others to write for her; but the whole machine gave way in the end.

Some time, however, before that end, and when she was quite able to get about and see to the work, a very good lady, who knew and loved Mrs. Vicars (the Comtesse de N—— by name), came and lived at Eastbourne, and Mrs. Vicars got a letter from her one day saying, Could she come and see her? That a great friend of hers (one of the Royal Family) had come to Eastbourne, that she had accidentally come across Mrs. Vicars' book, "Work among the Lost," which gave an account of the Brighton Home, and of Mrs. Vicars' method of carrying it on.

The royal personage (who was none other than the beloved Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt), it seemed, had long wished to establish such a home in Germany; so she had questioned the Countess closely concerning it, asked if Mrs. Vicars was still alive, and would it be possible for Mrs. Vicars to come to Eastbourne and talk to her on the subject? Mrs. Vicars consented, went to Eastbourne the next day, the first

of many visits, and a lively affection sprang up between her and the Princess. Finally it was arranged that one day her Royal Highness should travel incognita to Brighton herself to see the home, its inmates, its workrooms, and its laundry, so as to initiate her into the intricacies and mysteries inseparable from the establishment of such an institution in Germany.

The day for the royal visit arrived, and for many private reasons it was thought desirable to keep the event unknown. Mrs. Vicars drove to the station in a common fly, met the Grand Duchess and her lady, and drove them at first to the house of a relative of Mrs. Vicars, who was in the secret, to give the visitors a little rest and refreshment, and in about an hour's time Mrs. Vicars accompanied the Grand Duchess to the Home. "The girls" were not in the least aware of the rank of their visitor. They were accustomed to seeing ladies, who came for different purposes, and as the Grand Duchess entered each apartment, the girls (some of them a little more than children) of course all rose and curtsied, and sat down again to their needlework quietly and happily. They were all

dressed in cotton gowns, white caps, and white aprons; their hair neatly smoothed back and knotted behind. Generally, I believe, in such institutions the girls have their hair cut off, but this Mrs. Vicars would not allow. "Let them wear their hair," she would say, "as God gave it to them as a glory. I don't want them to think themselves convicts; they are living in a Home—a haven of rest." But to return to the Princess's visit.

When the Grand Duchess saw these poor girls (some of them rescued from the very gutter), "clothed," as it were, "and in their right minds," she was so deeply affected she could not keep back her tears.

After she had been over the whole house she felt tired (she was much out of health), and begged for a cup of tea; and when she noticed that in the large tea-room where the girls' meal was prepared, a small table was set for the matrons at the end of the room (the girls themselves being ranged each side of a long table placed down the centre of the apartment), the Grand Duchess said to Mrs. Vicars, "Do you always have tea with the girls, I mean in the same room?"

Mrs. Vicars said, "Yes, always when I am here!"

"Oh! then," said the kind Princess, "may I have tea there too with the girls?"

Mrs. Vicars, of course, agreed and was delighted; and accordingly she and her august visitor sat side by side at the top of the room. Grace was sung by the girls and a most happy meal was enjoyed by all, Mrs. Vicars having added some small delicacy to the girls' table in honour of the royal visit. After tea Mrs. Vicars made the girls sing a little together in parts, which they did very sweetly; then she leant forward towards the Princess and whispered that "she had a very great favour to ask her Royal Highness, and might she make it?" The Princess smiled her consent, upon which Mrs. Vicars made the following request:

"You know, madam, that these poor girls have not the remotest idea as to your Royal Highness's identity, for the visit, according to your wish, has been kept a profound secret. Now, you have no idea what an untold pleasure it would afford them, in their pleasureless lives, nor do you know the impetus it would be to them for good were they to know that people of your rank in

life are interested in their welfare. I have always held the Queen up to them as a model wife and mother; now, if I were to tell them who you are, and put them on their honour to keep the secret, they would be proud of being trusted, and I feel sure, that at all events for once, there will be an *inviolable secret known to over a hundred people—a real secret which will never leave these four walls!* May I tell them? Of course, if you dislike the idea we will think no more about it."

The Princess Alice thought for a moment, and then said, "I will trust them."

Upon this Mrs. Vicars, who had, of course, carried on this conversation with the Grand Duchess in a very low tone, rose from her chair, and very simply addressed the astonished girls.

"Children," she said, "can you keep a secret, do you think?"

The hundred voices answered eagerly, "Yes, we can."

"But," said Mrs. Vicars, "*would* you do so?"

"Yes," was answered as with one voice.

"You promise faithfully?"

"We do."

Then the good lady continued: "You know

how I have always taught you to love, revere, and pray for our Queen, have I not? Now this lady here present is the Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse, the Queen's daughter. For certain reasons her Royal Highness wishes her visit to you to be kept secret for a while, and she desires me to say she trusts this secret to your honour. She also desires me to say she shall never forget this happy visit, nor how delighted and touched she has been to see you all so innocently cheerful. She wishes me to say that she will ever take the deepest and most affectionate interest in your welfare, and prays God may bless you, now and ever."

The poor penitents were enchanted at the trust reposed in them, and the story never transpired, a marvellous proof of how well, fallen as they were, they still appreciated and understood the meaning of the word "honour."

And now I feel I must finish my short and (I confess) most inadequate sketch of the great work of a good woman. I really think I could fill volumes with the stories the good lady used to tell me of heart-breaking wrong, violence, misery, and deep repentance of girls who

rarely, but at times, escaped from the "Home" and recommenced their wicked lives; of their heart-broken and shame-faced return, sometimes to die, but oftener, thank God, to prosecute useful and virtuous lives.

"Why run away?" Mrs. Vicars would say. "Why scale a wall, when you could always ask for your own clothes and go out by the door? For in England you can't be kept anywhere against your will."

Then the constant confessions of sin and sorrow, and of deep love for the merciful Saviour, and for the kind and devoted lady, who, though strong and just, tempered her strength and justice with sympathy, were frequent—and often lasting.

The one sin, Mrs. Vicars told me (and I feel impelled to impress this upon all readers), which she almost despaired of ever seeing cured in a woman was *drunkenness*. "My girls," she would say, "have been, and some of them are, unchaste, thieves, liars, and criminals, but all these sins I have seen repented of, aye, and forsaken; but in all my experience of forty years I *never* saw a case of drunkenness cured!"

She told me this on the fortieth anniversary

of her having inaugurated the Home. "I do not say," she went on, "that the drink habit never *is* cured; but, you see, after it has been indulged in for a time it becomes no longer a choice, but a necessity. But, after all," she added, with her beaming smile, "The Lord Christ can cast out *all* devils; and *will* do so if approached in the right way. But—*beware of drunkenness!*"

And now I have done; but *she* is reaping her reward.

"Surely she opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness."

V

A HALF-TRUE STORY

[In my reminiscences I have related nothing but what is absolutely true. This story is only half true—that is to say, it is true as to *facts*, but not as to *locality*. My conversation with the madman is literally true—every word.]

I WAS one evening presiding over a happy party of young people (my guests), who had trooped into my sitting-room to partake of that pleasant and movable feast, a five o'clock tea. We were all thoroughly at home with each other, most of the individuals present being cousins, and all of them near relations to myself. Some had just returned from riding, others from driving or walking, and all seemed bent upon half an hour's unconstrained, unconventional comfort.

One damsel had thrown herself at full length upon the sofa, two others sat upon cushions placed for that purpose in front of the fire, while the young men were sprawling about—as young men will—in different attitudes, indicative of

each one's peculiar stage of fatigue or laziness. Candles and lamps had been discarded, and the firelight alone illumined the room.

Suddenly one of the young girls addressed me in a coaxing tone, thus:

"Dear Auntie, do tell us a story."

"A story!" I exclaimed; "and pray what about?"

"A ghost story," exclaimed a chorus of young voices.

"Oh, no! I never tell ghost stories, although I know a good many, but——"

"Well," persisted the first speaker, "tell us *something*—something truly dreadful, and dreadfully true."

"Would you like me to tell you something that really happened to myself years ago?"

"Oh, yes; better than anything else."

"Very well. Poke the fire into a blaze—so; and now, if you are all ready, I will begin, and remember that what I am going to tell you is really and literally true.

"Some years ago I took to the strange habit of rising early—but very, very early I mean—and taking a solitary country walk. This would not

have been such a strange thing to do had the hour been less unconventionally early, and had I confined my pedestrian feats to the summer-time; but this I did not do. Winter and summer were alike to me then, and at both seasons I invariably rose at four o'clock, and was out of the house before five; and I need hardly remind you that at that hour in the winter it is quite dark, unless, of course, there should be a moon.

"Some of you, no doubt, are saying to yourselves, 'What a foolish old woman to leave her comfortable warm bed at such an unheard-of hour, instead of waiting, like a sensible person, to go out in the daytime.'

"Ah! foolish it may have been, and, as it turned out, it certainly was; but the habit did not originate in any case from caprice. It arose from a wretched restlessness of mind and body, the effects of a great sorrow—the greatest, in my opinion, that can befall any woman, especially a young one, as I was then. Some of you here know to what I allude, so I need not enter into the circumstances beyond saying briefly that on one wretched winter's morning, as the clocks were

striking five, a blow fell upon me, shattering all my earthly hopes of future happiness.

"For months afterwards I could not sleep, and I used to lie restlessly, feverishly tossing about in my bed, morbidly recalling and living over again each particular incident of the awful night which preceded my trouble, dreading also to hear the ruthless clock chime out the fatal hour; and after it *had* done so, my agitation and distress would reach such a pitch that nothing could quiet me.

"At last I conceived the plan of rising early from my weary, sleepless couch, dressing hastily, and being *out* and *far away* before the dreaded moment should arrive. God grant that none of you may ever experience the torture that I did then, only to find out, too, how impossible it is to run away from oneself!

"My home at that time was in Scotland. I lived in a dear old house which was poised, like a bird, upon a rock, and literally hung over the sea, the silver spray dashing ceaselessly against its windows. On one side of the house there was a good-sized old-fashioned garden, laid out in terraces down to the sea, and not a quarter of

a mile distant from the other side was a thick fir-wood.

"It was into this wood that I generally strayed of a morning, and, sitting upon one of the felled trees, of which there were always a number lying prone upon the ground, I would watch the day-light gradually appearing, and the sun rising grandly out of the sea. After the sun had fairly risen I always hastened homewards, so as to avoid meeting any early risers who might be about the place; and the rest of the day I would shut myself up with my books and music, a prey to harrowing memories. I cannot defend my worse than useless life at this time. My grief was selfish, and therefore all the harder to bear, for God has taught me since that there is no such comfort in sorrow as that of seeking to comfort others.

"There were no gentlemen's places near my home, consequently no neighbours, no visitors, ever molested me. But not many miles distant there existed an old, melancholy looking mansion, called Mornington, which had been uninhabited for many years, but latterly, to the great annoyance of the farmers and small gentry around, it had been let

to a Dr. Sterndale, who kept an establishment for incurable lunatics.

"Everything, however, seemed to go on quietly there, the unhappy patients never, apparently, venturing beyond the park, which was shut in by large iron gates. These were always locked, but now and then passers-by caught glimpses through the bars of gaunt, strangely attired figures, and sometimes, though rarely, of pale, anxious-looking faces peering through the ironwork.

"There was a dilapidated lodge at the entrance gates, surrounded by what had been, years ago, a garden, but now it was choked up by overgrown shrubs—evergreens—which seemed vainly struggling and struggling, out of kindly delicacy, to hide their old friend's broken windows and unhinged doors.

"Certainly this lodge had an uncanny appearance, and the report had once been spread—a ridiculously false one, of course—that it was at times used as a 'dead-house.' No living person was ever seen to enter the door, no smoke to issue from the chimney, and when Dr. Sterndale drove out in his lumbering coach, which he did now and again, accompanied by some of his most favoured

patients, he invariably opened the lodge gates himself and carefully relocked them, thus requiring no aid from a lodge-keeper.

"The doctor's vehicle, just mentioned, rather struck awe, I found, in the simple villager mind; for my gardener related that one day, as it was coming towards him, he saw it suddenly shut itself up with a loud snap. 'For all the wor-r-rld,' said the man timorously, 'like a large mouth, gulping down the *puir* folk who were inside.' In vain I assured him that this phenomenon was simply the result of some clever inside mechanism, and the country people became superstitiously alarmed, and this sentiment was by no means lessened when the gardener proceeded to give further details. He stated that one day at the moment the carriage passed him, one of the blinds, which had been hastily drawn down, was pushed aside by a large white hand, covered with glittering rings; that then a face was thrust forward, making horrid grimaces and gesticulations; but that both head and hands hastily disappeared with a jerk, as though the individual who claimed them had been forcibly dragged back. The blind was then replaced, but it shook

exceedingly, as if some struggle were going on behind it; and then the carriage passed by, vanishing in a cloud of dust.

"I laughed at the story to some, and endeavoured to explain it simply to others; but finding it was impossible to stem the torrent of obstinacy or ignorance, or both, and not feeling *quite* comfortable about it myself, I left the matter alone.

"That the lunatics were of a dangerous class I had often heard it said, but such a report would be sure, I thought, to get afloat, were it true or the reverse; and as Mornington was a long way from any house—it was quite a mile the other side of the fir-wood, which itself was nearly a mile broad—I did not trouble myself about such tales. My maid, however, who had lived years with me, constantly implored me to be less venturesome in my morning walks; but I experienced no fear; the greatest calamity that *could* befall me had come, so I was callous about anything else.

"Well, one morning late in the autumn, having been more restless than usual during the previous night, I got up earlier even than was my wont,

and after a brisk walk found myself in the very heart of the wood. I knew exactly where I was, for a seat had been placed there to mark the centre-point. It was one of the (then) new-fashioned double seats, upon which people sit back to back, and just as I reached it I heard a village clock strike five, and for the first time in my life—I knew not why—when I realised my distance from home and the earliness of the hour, a shudder came over me, while the fact that the place was very lonely, and that I was only a weak woman and utterly defenceless, forced itself unpleasantly upon me. I determined, however, to pooh-pooh my fears, to pull myself together, and to persuade myself that I was not afraid.

"'It is the weather,' I said, 'which has unnerved me,' and certainly it was not reassuring.

"It was a fitful morning; there had been a good deal of rain during the night, accompanied by wild gusts of wind. Heavy black and white clouds were hurrying across the sky, and seemed to chase the terrified and fugitive moon.

"She was at her full, and at one moment her bright and almost blinding beams would pierce

through the waving trees, casting strange unearthly shadows around; and at the next, she and the shuddering wood would be enveloped in a funeral pall of inky blackness. The effect was weird in the extreme, and during one of the moments of sudden obscurity I sank down on the seat spell-bound, looking up at the sky with a beating heart, and longing for the next appearance of the rolling moon. One angry cloud had already released her, but I saw that yet another must pass over her face before her blessed light could reappear, and it was the strangest cloud I ever beheld, being the exact shape of a man's hand, with one long bony finger stretched out, I fancied, in warning. The moon seemed to roll slowly and painfully between the fingers, looking very pale and faint the while; but at last, with a bound, she emerged from the shadows with a wild and happy brightness, as though rejoicing to escape from the clutch of the hand.

"I, also, was inexpressibly relieved, and rose quickly from my seat, intending to hurry home; but how can I paint the amazement, the horror I felt, when I perceived I was no longer alone! *Another human being* had silently, with cat-like

steps, arrived during the darkness ; *a man* was sitting on the seat, on the further end of the other side. His face was turned away, but his appearance was so peculiarly alarming that my heart stood still ; for at a glance I 'took in' the situation.

"'An escaped lunatic!' I thought, 'and my only chance of safety is to "brave it out."'

"As these thoughts darted through my brain, the man slowly, very slowly, turned his head and looked deliberately at me. Oh! *that look!* Never, to my dying day, shall I forget it! I see it now. Everything most terrifying, most sinister, most repulsive was in that look.

"Audacity, cowardice, insolence, malice—all—all these were there, and above all, and through them all—madness. The man was deadly pale, or the struggling dawn, which was just silvering the horizon, made him appear so. His eyes were frightfully bloodshot, his teeth were large and very white, and there was a light froth upon his lips, and the whole face had the blue-grey appearance of a corpse!

"The man wore a long ulster coat, buttoned from his throat to his feet, and a tumbled white

collar appeared above it, giving me the impression that he must have escaped from his bed, and in his night-gear.

"What alarmed me almost more than anything—(if anything could be more alarming than everything was!)—was the fact that a centre button of the coat, at the waist, was unbuttoned, and in the aperture thus formed one of the man's hands was thrust, and I kept asking myself, 'What is he hiding there? A pistol, a knife, or what?'

"Feeling my extreme helplessness, and how entirely I was, humanly speaking, at the mercy of a madman, I sent up a silent prayer to the All-Powerful God—a cry for help—for wisdom how to act; and, on looking back now, I can see how wonderfully my ejaculatory prayer was instantly answered, for I felt suddenly impelled, by a decision not my own, not to run nor even to *walk* away, but to reseat myself with the greatest apparent calmness! (For in the first excitement of fear upon having become aware of the man's presence, I had started to my feet!)

"This act seemed to surprise, to please the man, for he smiled, and, to my unspeakable terror,

slid slowly along the seat till he came to me, *although still on the other side.* I felt his shoulder touch mine—but I dared not shrink from the contact; then he bent his head back till it rested on my veil, his fœtid breath mingling with mine, while he peered, insolently, mockingly, into my face. After a few moments—which appeared hours to me—during which he intently scanned my features, while I, God helping me, tried to meet his gaze bravely, he said deliberately, and evidently watching the effect of his words: 'I saw you coming into the wood. I hid behind a tree, and then I followed you. When the moon shone out I hid again, and touched your gown as you passed, but you didn't know. Ha, ha! funny, isn't it? Then, when it got dark again, I crept up to the seat; and when you sat down, I did so too. Why shouldn't I? I have as much right here as you. I say' (coming a trifle nearer and putting his horrid mouth close to my ear) 'we are quite alone in the wood, you and I—you and I! Nice, isn't it? Are you afraid—eh?'

"'No,' I answered boldly; 'why should I be afraid? We are not alone, as you suppose, for——'

"'Eh?' said he, nervously looking round; then, in a whisper, 'Who is here besides us?'

"'God!' I answered, clearly and firmly. 'He is here. He is stronger than I or you, and He takes care of us both.'

"He looked hard at me, and I looked back fearlessly (apparently) at him, resolved that my glance should not be the first to falter. At last, after a deadly but silent battle between his will and mine, his eyes quailed and fell, and I knew instinctively that I had gained a victory, for he fidgeted uneasily on the seat, and turned his head away, while I breathed more freely.

"After a short silence, he said in a hoarse whisper, as though afraid of being heard: 'I say, I can't sleep, that's why I come out so early. My servants' (with a wave of the hand and the assumption of a *grand seigneur*) 'have their orders always to keep my breakfast hot!' Then, with a howl of bitter distress, he cried out: 'Oh, oh! if I could only sleep! I would give kingdoms to sleep!'

"It is remarkable that as he gave utterance to this bitter cry, in spite of the deadly fear I felt and of the almost certainty that I should never

live to tell this tale, a mighty sympathy arose in my heart for the wretched maniac; for did I not know, as well almost as he, the agony of sleeplessness?

"I therefore said, kindly and pityingly, 'How strange! I, too, cannot sleep!'

"Looking at me with a world of despair in his face, he said, 'Is it a *curse?*' Then, rocking himself to and fro on the seat, he moaned out, 'Ah, what —what shall I do to sleep?'

"There was such a ring of anguish in his tones that my heart bled for him, and I said gently, 'Oh! try what I have tried—that which is after all the only comfort, waking or sleeping.'

"'What's that?' he said eagerly.

"'Pray!' I said.

"'Oh!' he answered wearily, 'I have prayed, but God won't hear me. How *can* He, when He is up there'—pointing to the sky—'and I am left in that hell?'—pointing towards the madhouse.

"'But He *does* hear,' I said solemnly and as to a child. 'He sees and hears *everything*. He sees you and me here *now*. *He* knew we should meet this morning, and He it is who teaches me to say to you, Pray! Tell Him, when lying on your

restless bed, just as you have told me—that you can't sleep, that you suffer, that you are unhappy, that—that ——'

"I was going on, when my companion suddenly started up, and looking uneasily around, whispered, 'Hush! hark!'

"He seemed to listen eagerly, and then, with an expression in his face of intense hatred, gradually and cautiously drew the hand, hitherto concealed, out of his breast.

"A deadly sickness seized me, for my worst fears were realised when I beheld the light of the dawning day gleam upon the blade of a murderous-looking knife; but a ray of hope was at the same moment vouchsafed to me, for, following with my eyes the direction of his—oh, joy! two horsemen were apparent through the trees, trotting slowly along a grassy pathway generally only used by foot-passengers, and each carried a ready-cocked pistol and seemed in eager search.

"Of course I knew they were on the track of the wretched man at my side, and although they were quite within hail, I dared not either call or make them a sign, feeling convinced that had I done either the knife would have been plunged into my

bosom, for I perceived the maniac was watching *me* narrowly, and he evidently meant to sell his liberty dearly.

"'Had the horsemen seen us?' I wondered, in an agony of hope and fear; but I dared not move, and words would utterly fail me to express my sensations when I suddenly saw my miserable companion start to his feet, brandishing the knife, and, leaving his side of the seat, come towards mine. I was preparing, as a last resource, to scream and run for my life, when, to my amazement, instead of attacking me, the poor wretch threw himself on his knees at my feet, trembling like a leaf, and, burying his face in my lap—I had never relinquished my seat—said, in a hurried and imploring whisper, 'Save me from those two men; they did not see me. For the love of God don't give me up to them. You are good and kind, and are sorry for me, and you have told me to pray; so now I pray God and I pray you, don't—don't give me up.'

"For an instant he remained motionless, with his arms buried in my lap, and I really don't know what folly my womanly impulse of intense sympathy might not have tempted me to commit had

I not at that instant caught sight of the knife which he still grasped tightly in his hand. I shuddered as I saw it, and he must have felt me do so; for, raising his head quickly, and putting his awful face close to mine, he muttered fiercely, and half to himself, 'She doesn't look true. Oh, if I thought she would betray me!'

"Now, certainly, I thought my last hour must have come; but, in spite of my desperation, I managed to say calmly and in an authoritative whisper, 'Hush! be quiet, or they will hear you! They will soon have passed, and then you shall come home with me.' ('O God!' I thought, 'did the horsemen see us?')

"He crouched down obediently, like a child, hiding his face on my knees; and once more I cried for divine assistance in my awful need, —and again my prayer was answered, for, on looking despairingly across the wood, I saw, within thirty or forty yards of us, and behind the unfortunate man on his knees—the same two men who had passed by on horseback. So they *had* seen us, and help *was* at hand at last! They were creeping towards us, and making signs to

me not to move, so as to give them time to approach. I leant, therefore, over the wretched maniac, gently stroking his hair, and speaking soothingly to him, telling him 'for his life not to rise or show himself—not to move till the men were gone.' So he knelt on, with his head buried in my lap, and trembling with fear. I must confess that at this moment I hated myself and felt a very Delilah, for the poor fellow began to stammer forth a few disjointed words from the Lord's Prayer. But what—what could I do?

"And the men kept coming on silently and stealthily—nearer—closer, till at last one of them sprang forward, and threw some kind of cloth over the madman's head, while his companion placed gyves upon his wrists, and then—then I saw the hideous knife fall harmlessly to the ground!

"I know not to this day how it happened, but before (I suppose) the cloth had quite blinded the astonished maniac, and in the struggle that followed, he bit my hand nearly to the bone! I have the mark now, and always shall have it; but so excited was I that I never even felt the wound till, on my way home, I saw the blood!

"It is not easy for me to describe what I felt

when, after the keepers had uncovered the poor wretch's face and were leading him away (cowed and manacled but not subdued), he looked witheringly at me, and said between his teeth, 'God's bitterest curse upon *you*, for you cheated me with your prayers and lying words, and I trusted you and you betrayed me!'

"Then came a string of imprecations, in the midst of which the keepers hurried him into a vehicle which was following, and they drove away.

" My story is done. How I got home I know not; I was more dead than alive, and for weeks that awful face, those bitter curses, and the cry, 'I trusted you and you betrayed me!' haunted me; and on every anniversary of that day I rise at the exact hour, and on my knees pray God to bless, protect, and comfort *him*, should he still be living, and all wretched beings like him whose humanity is shattered and their lives a living death."

THE CRIMSON PORTRAIT

[This story is also partly true; the picture mentioned is in my possession, but the personalities of the different members of the family mentioned are mostly fictitious.]

I SAT motionless for some moments, and then—looked again. Yes, It was there still! So, with a beating heart, I rose from my writing-table and approached It, but as *I* got nearer, It seemed to get fainter. Hastily pressing forward, and putting out my hand as though to grasp—to retain It, It was no longer there!

It was very strange, and I felt extremely agitated; but with some amount of courage I again sat down to my writing, determined to collect my scared senses and to watch.

Before, however, describing what followed, I will give as condensed a history as I can of the singular picture which had thus alarmed me.

It had belonged to the late lord, my husband's father, who had died under peculiar

circumstances, leaving his affairs in much confusion.

Owing, however, to the blessed law of entail, he was unable to ruin his heir, as he undoubtedly wished to do, for he and his eldest son, my husband, had never been on good terms; indeed, I should not be guilty of exaggeration were I to say they had ever been on the very worst; and this bitterness between father and son had much increased during the last few years, because the latter had stoutly refused to entertain the former's wish that the entail should be broken. My husband loved and clung to the places and things with which he had been familiar all his life; besides, he knew, as did his brothers, whom he consulted, that his father, in suggesting such a thing, was prompted by no honourable motive.

"As I am the last in entail," said my husband, "it rests with me to prevent the squandering of the fortune, or the selling of the heirlooms that have been ours for generations."

"My father," answered Leo, the youngest brother, bitterly, "says he wishes to pay some 'debt of honour,' but I doubt the 'honour.' No; he means to pay for another 'fling' before old age,

and the inability to enjoy himself, shall overtake him."

"Ah!" said Reginald, the second brother, "don't talk to me of 'honour'! *I* can never forget our poor mother's broken heart and subsequent death. He wants money, of course, to provide for that ——."

"Well, well," hastily interrupted my husband, "it cannot be my duty to injure all of you."

And thus it was agreed, to the old lord's great disappointment, that the entail should *not* be broken. For centuries the family had owned, besides houses and land, many heirlooms, such as jewels, pictures, rare china, and historical furniture, and when my husband's father became aware that his son would not give up his right to these things, he, possessing amongst other delightful qualities a most revengeful disposition, determined to "pay out" his heir for thus coercing him, and set to work to do so after the following ingenious fashion.

Upon different plausible excuses, he packed up many of the portable heirlooms in boxes; he also dismounted and rolled up some of the priceless paintings—"for their better security,"

he declared, if ever he found it necessary to explain his actions—and put them all under the charge of individuals with whom he alone was acquainted. At the same time he took care, for fear of alarming the receivers, not to disclose the histories or the value of the confided articles; but in each case he paid a sum of money down, upon the understanding that none of the valuables, under any circumstances, should be delivered up to any one but himself.

Most of the individuals he thus trusted had been the old lord's boon companions, men not too particular as to how they earned a few pounds; and also they lived, most of them, at a convenient distance—some even abroad.

Meanwhile, pains were taken that no memoranda should be left, either to indicate the whereabouts of the valuables or in any way to facilitate their recovery. Thus, when their owner died suddenly a year or two later, there was a tremendous hue and cry in the family. What had become of the missing articles, which were all mentioned in the heirloom list? No one could say.

The trouble, expense and difficulties, therefore,

attending the discovery and recovery of all these treasures would certainly, had he been cognisant of them, have fully satisfied the offended father's revengeful malice.

By dint, however, of advertising, calling in detectives, and other methods, every valuable was at last restored, save one—namely, the picture which was now hanging in my writing-room. For quite two years it *could not* be traced. It was mentioned once in the catalogue as the portrait of the old lord's great-grandfather (the ancestor from whom most of the family property had accrued); and once again in the "Family Annals" (an old volume carefully treasured in the "Charter Room"), in which the said gentleman was invariably styled "ye Wicked Lord." Of this appellation he seemed to have been aware, and he was as proud of it as of the beauty of his person, which was renowned.

The missing portrait was mentioned in the list as "The Crimson Portrait," and my husband could only just remember it, as it had always, during his boyhood, hung in a room very rarely used, and situated at the top of the house.

A curious cypher, now faint from age, was bracketed to the name of the portrait in the list; it resembled the well-known *jettatura* sign of the hand, with outstretched first and fourth fingers, supposed by superstitious persons to exorcise the Evil Eye.

Every means were taken, at the time of the old lord's demise, to discover this picture, but in vain, and my husband began to despair of tracing it. But one day he received a foreign letter from a certain "Josef Hoffman," who stated that, in consequence of a long absence from home, he had not heard of the old lord's death, nor had he seen the advertisements about the missing picture; indeed, he stated he had forgotten all about the painting until he noticed it on his return, quite lately, rolled up in his lumber-yard! He wished now to return it to its owner.

"Will your lordship come *yourself*," Josef wrote, "and fetch it? for I have something very particular to communicate, for your lordship's ear only. Pray come quickly, for I am a dying man." There was a postscript added: "It is carefully rolled up, with the words, 'The Crimson Portrait,' written on the cover.—J. H."

My husband was overjoyed at this news, and much mystified; so he travelled himself, as requested, to the village of Iseghem in Belgium. But on entering the house he was informed that Josef Hoffman had died an hour before his arrival. The poor man's son, however, was there, apparently overwhelmed with grief; and on seeing my husband, who produced Josef's letter, he delivered up the picture, "Acting," he said, "upon his father's orders."

"He expected to see me, did he not?" asked my husband.

"He did, my lord," answered the youth, "and was looking for you all yesterday and the day before."

"But did he leave no message for me?"

"None, my lord."

But as the young man helped to put the picture into the hired conveyance, and bade my husband a courteous farewell, he devoutly crossed himself and said, in French, he was glad to get rid of the picture, as they had had no luck—at least, so his poor father had said—ever since it had been in their keeping.

Although my husband distinctly heard the

youth say these words, he only remembered them later, and upon his return home, and as soon as we conveniently could, we obtained the help of a competent picture-dealer, who carefully unrolled the canvas, and pronounced the picture in "almost" perfect preservation.

"Almost!" echoed my husband. "Why *almost?* Is it damaged in any way?"

"Well," answered the old man, after cautiously examining the picture in all lights, "there is one spot there"—indicating with his finger—"there—in that corner, and spreading towards the front, which seems curiously faded."

"But why," interrupted I, scarcely noticing the old dealer's words, "why should it be called 'The Crimson Portrait,' when the gentleman it represents is dressed from top to toe in russet brown? There is not a touch of crimson in the whole picture."

In fact, the painting exhibited a distinguished-looking man, clad entirely in brown. He faced the spectator, and his head was slightly turned to the right, as though in a listening attitude, while an amused smile curled his lips. The features were fine, rather of a Mephistophelean type; but

the smile was that of "Mephisto" in a pleased humour.

On the left of the picture was painted a balcony opening to a garden beyond; while at the back a dark curtain was represented, which half disclosed a panelled door.

The "Wicked Lord" seemed in the act of passing through a marble-pillared hall, and some sound appeared to have arrested and amused him, for he was apparently pausing for a moment, as he stood on the black and white tessellated pavement.

"It is a magnificent work of art," reiterated the picture-dealer, without noticing my query; "but that faded corner is a blemish. It has the effect of a shadow in the wrong place. Shall I try to clean it? or might I touch it up a little?"

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated my husband, who had a righteous horror of any "touching up." Then, fearful lest he should have hurt the old man's feelings, he added that he had gone to so much expense lately over the picture, he must wait a little before doing more.

Then arose the question, Where should it be hung?

"In my writing-room," I implored.

"The 'Wicked Lord' is scarcely a suitable companion for my gentle little wife," laughed my husband, "but she shall have her way."

So, to my delight, I was permitted to appropriate the picture, and it was forthwith hung exactly opposite my writing-table.

Weeks elapsed, and I had become quite accustomed to the "Wicked Lord's" society, while the portrait's disappearance and recovery were now ancient history and quite forgotten.

And here we are, having arrived at the point in the narrative whence I started.

I was sitting one morning, writing. The letter was one of medium importance, and, finding myself at a loss for the moment for a suitable word, I began, with much lack of originality, first to nibble the top of my pen, and then to gaze casually and vaguely about me, at nothing in particular. Suddenly I glanced upward at the portrait, and was struck by a very curious change which appeared to have come over that portion of it which the old dealer had pronounced "faded."

I watched it narrowly for some seconds just to convince myself that I was the victim of no illusion—no fancy. But, no! the strange shadow, though still grey and misty, was undoubtedly deepening and changing in colour; and to my further amazement, as I looked, it—the "shadowy appearance"—took the form of *a woman!* She was crouching on the ground, close behind the man in brown, and it gave one the idea that she had crept noiselessly (as *she* thought), through the curtained door, but that the Brown Man, as evinced by his listening attitude and contemptuous smile, was perfectly aware of her presence. Gradually the drapery about the woman's figure assumed a faint but ever-deepening crimson, and I could now distinguish that she held something concealed in her hand, but I failed to discern *what.*

For a moment I stared in stupid astonishment at the misty object, then I shut and rubbed my eyes and looked again. Yes, there it was still. So, with really praiseworthy courage, I rose and approached it. But, as I did so, the woman's figure began to melt away. I was close enough, however, to put my hand out and touch it, and

how foolish I felt! There was nothing there but canvas and paint, with the Brown Man looking on at me, with his insulting, amused smile.

Much irritated, and not to say alarmed, I returned to my writing, but my heart beat as though it must burst, and I trembled in every limb.

For some minutes, however, I obstinately wrote on; then, feeling impelled to look up once more, I saw the awful shape becoming each moment more and more distinct; for I now made out *what* the woman held in her hand (which was so tightly clenched as to show every bone in it). It was a dagger!

Her drapery had once more deepened in colour, and was now of a vivid crimson; but what, I think, alarmed me most was the fact that, although her face was turned towards the "Wicked Lord," her glittering eyes were apparently watching *me* with a curiously threatening expression, as though, panther-like, she were only awaiting my least movement to spring.

With a terrified gasp, and expecting I know not what, I rose again to my feet. "I can bear

this strain no longer," I whispered; "I must get away out of the room." But how to pass *that woman?*

Making one ineffectual step forward, I stumbled, and fell down unconscious!

I cannot have lain there many minutes, for when I came to myself I was still alone, still on the ground close to the picture, *with the blood oozing from a deep scratch on my arm!*

My nerves by this time were totally unstrung; an excuse for the fact that, at that moment, nothing earthly would have persuaded me but that the panther-woman herself had wounded —scratched me—with the dagger, of course.

As I rose from the ground I cast a terrified glance at the picture, and thanked heaven that but one figure was now perceptible, and that it was the brown one.

With a sobbing prayer I hastened by, out of the room, anxious to feel myself within hail of any "humans"—husband, children, or servants, I cared not which! I had had enough of super-humans.

Becoming calmer, I sought my husband, but he was out, and after a quiet cogitation, I determined

I would put off relating to him my extraordinary experience, for I felt intuitively that, were he to believe it—and me—it would annoy him; but that, on the other hand, if he disbelieved it, and thought it only my fancy, he would ridicule me; and if there is one thing I dislike more than another it is ridicule, or to be accused of hysterical fancies. All the same, I was resolved upon one point: *Come what might, I would never be alone with that picture again!* It *must* be removed out of my room, and at once. But what reason (unless I gave the true one) could I give for such apparent caprice? I had made such a point of having it in my sitting-room. That there *was* something demoniacal about the painting I had not a doubt —and a mystery also; otherwise, why should it be mentioned in the list as "The Crimson Portrait," when, in its normal state, there was no tinge of crimson to be seen? No! the people who wrote that list must have known. There was certainly something "uncanny" about it. So, come what might, the "Wicked Lord" and his ferociously crimson lady must part company with *me*, and at once.

Very quickly, chance, or, more strictly, a

beneficent Providence, came to my aid in the matter, and on that very evening! It happened thus:

We had a small dinner-party, and among the friends we had invited was a great Royal Academician—Sir F—— L——. In the course of conversation my husband related to his guest the odd story of the portrait's disappearance and subsequent recovery. Thereupon the Royal Academician expressed a wish to make the "Brown Lord's" acquaintance, and after having done so, he pronounced the picture "a work of art of great value"; but, he added, he considered it badly hung.

"It is too large," he said, "for where it is placed, and also it is in a bad light; for, if you remark, *there is a curious shadow in the corner of it*, which looks as if it were faded, and this would not show so much if it were hung in the dining-room among the other portraits. Put it over the fire-place—there, where the mirror is now."

"But," objected my husband, "my lady wants the picture in her room."

I hastened at once to assure him, with much apparent self-abnegation, that I would not for the

world condemn such a valuable picture to a place unworthy of it; and after much praise for my unselfishness (!) its removal was decided on.

Just before the Royal Academician finally bade us good-night, he said: "Did I not perceive a rod and running rings fixed upon the frame of the picture, as though a curtain had at some time been hung across it?"

My husband answered that, now he thought of it, there was a dark velvet curtain in a room upstairs, which probably was the one; *for embroidered in its corner was the same cypher as that which was to be seen opposite the portrait's name in the catalogue.*

"May I see the curtain?" asked the Royal Academician; and after examining it, he laughed and said, "It is to be hoped there is no *diablerie* attached to the portrait, as the cypher might suggest; for, don't you see, it is the *jettatura?*"

I could see from my husband's manner that this half-jest from a comparative stranger was distasteful to him, for his only weakness—and a very small one—was an over-sensitiveness regarding his family and ancestors; they were, in

his eyes, too sacred to be joked about, or even lightly spoken of.

So the Royal Academician was not invited again for some time. The picture was removed into the drawing-room at once; but, bearing in mind the conversation just narrated between my husband and the Royal Academician, I again put off my confession to the former, judging it would be irritating to him, and wanting in tact in me, were I to relate my experience just now. "I will bide my time," I thought, "and perhaps the beautiful murderess"—(for that her intentions *were*, or *had been* at one time, murderous, who could doubt? or wherefore the dagger?)—may shrink from rehearsing her bloody attempts in an apartment so constantly full of guests as our dining-room."

I confess, however, that I never entered the room alone if I could help it, nor could I glance at the picture without a shudder.

One evening we had a large dinner-party, in honour of the engagement of a young girl to a cousin of my husband. We had a very merry meal, and during the entertainment my husband related the story of the picture and its recovery, as I thought

he was too fond of doing, for *I* always tried to forget the horrid thing and all about it; consequently, all eyes had been turned admiringly towards it, except my own, for I always sat with my back to it, if I could so manage without disarranging the symmetry of the table.

When the time came for us ladies to rise and leave the gentlemen to their wine, it was suggested that before we left the room we should drink the health of the happy *fiancés*, Highland fashion—that is, standing, the men with each one foot on the table. This was done with acclamation; and as we were filing out of the room, the poor little *promise* electrified us all by giving a piercing shriek, and, without further ado, fainting on her lover's shoulder.

We carried her at once to an open window in the next room, sending every one away, and she soon recovered, but seemed to be labouring under extreme terror, and I noticed that she was evidently greatly relieved at finding herself in a different room. I made a shrewd guess, therefore, as to the cause of her alarm.

She had been placed at dinner exactly opposite the picture, and upon my pressing her to tell me if

anything had frightened her, she whispered in my ear just what I expected to hear.

"That picture," she sobbed out hysterically. "That horrid, horrid picture! And oh! that terrible woman! Where did *she* come from? And those wicked, malicious, *glittering*, LEERING"—each word screamed louder than the last—"EYES! I shall never, *never* forget them, nor *her*. Oh! where's Ernest? *You* sat with your back" (she meant, I presume, to the picture) "and didn't see it. *I did!* But oh! where's Ernest? If he doesn't come directly I shall go off again. Oh! oh!" and she gave such indubitable signs of following out her intention that, after more salts and sal-volatile, I packed her off in the brougham with her Ernest, in the hope that he would comfort her on the way home. "Anyhow," I overheard the old butler say confidentially to my maid, "it is to be 'oped he will stop her noise."

After this *esclandre* I felt I could keep my secret no longer. So I, then and there, and in the presence of the few guests who still remained, told my husband my own experience, now so curiously corroborated by so unprejudiced and voluble a witness as the young *fiancée*.

As I foresaw, he was much put out, and being entirely "at sea" as to what measures he should take, or whether he should take any at all, he relieved himself by being angry with everybody. He was very angry with me because I had kept the story to myself, and, with praiseworthy consistency, was angrier still with "that stupid, hysterical girl," as he called the little *fiancée*, because she had not.

"Making such a row," he said, "and telling such a cock-and-bull story." Then, with sarcasm, he asked our startled guests "whether any one of *them* had seen anything, and if any had, would they kindly speak, for now was their time. Had any other questionable individuals forced themselves into their society?" But at that moment all were so much astonished at their host's unreasonable wrath, that had the devil himself and his angels appeared and claimed acquaintance, they would have shaken hands warmly with them all rather than irritate their host further.

After this outburst the guests all quickly dispersed, and my husband, in much annoyance, declared there was "nothing tangible" in the story. Nor had I the courage to point out to

him that the very fact of non-tangibleness was just the alarm-gauge of all such coincidences. The picture, he declared, was like every other picture (so it was at that moment), and that he would see every one very far off before he would banish one of his most valuable paintings to the garrets in consequence of "a love-sick girl's silly cackle." All the same, I saw he was uneasy, and knew his excitement would not last. So I waited, and when he got over it a little, I suggested his searching among the family records to find out all he could concerning the "Wicked Lord" and his familiars, and also that the curtain, which had been put away, should be replaced on the frame. "But," I diplomatically added, "it need not always be drawn, you know." My advice was taken. The curtain was re-hung, and search was made among the old papers in the hope of finding out something.

"Perhaps," my dear, noble-minded husband said, "we may discover some wrong, even after all these years, which it may be our happy lot to set right."

One day, with a pale face and shaking hand, he brought me a manuscript, all torn and defaced

by age, which told us everything, and more than everything, that we wished to know. It recorded a fearful tale of crime perpetrated by the "Wicked Lord," and recorded threats of undying revenge on the part of the "Crimson Lady."

"We, alas!" said my husband, after reading the manuscript, "can do nothing. No single creature is now living to whom we could make amends for our ancestor's sin; all we can do is to strive, by our own innocent lives, to wipe out the stain we have discovered."

And certainly *he* acted up to this determination as far as he was concerned. The fact of shame being attached to the name of any ancestor of his, however remote, was to him a source of real pain and grief.

He gave strict orders that the curtain should always be kept drawn in front of the portrait, and added he would have it removed upstairs as soon as possible, into the room where it originally hung; but one thing and another helped to put this decision out of his mind, until a circumstance occurred which hastened his action in the matter.

We had dined late one evening, my husband and

I, alone; and after dinner we had adjourned into the conservatory, which led out of the dining-room. We sat there and had coffee. The servants, meantime, we could hear, had cleared away the dinner and put out the lights, while we sat silent, not to say sleepy.

Suddenly we heard—something—a sound which gave us both a violent start.

It issued from the next room—a jingling noise, twice repeated, as of the rings of a curtain being suddenly and vehemently drawn aside. For a second we looked at one another; then my husband rang the bell violently, and, springing for a light, he and I rushed into the darkened dining-room.

On entering, we perceived at once that the curtain which, during dinner, had certainly been drawn across the picture, was now wide open—both sides; and as we approached, we distinctly saw the "Crimson Lady's" glittering eyes positively shining at us through the semi-darkness, like those of an angry animal. As we drew closer, however, they became dimmer, and "went out" as it were, and we found ourselves standing opposite the "Wicked Lord" only, with his eternal smile.

By this time the old butler, Simpkins, had entered the room, amazed at the vehemence of the summons which he had received. He was accustomed to taking things easily was Simpkins, and after a dignified fashion, for he was an old man, whose father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had all been in the family's service. Simpkins had never been known to be flurried or in an undignified hurry. Now he stood before his master, calmly inquiring, "Your lordship rang?"

"Who has been in this room since you cleared away?" angrily asked my husband. "Did I not give strict orders, too, that *that* curtain" (the old man now perceived for the first time that the curtain was open, and turned pale) "was to be kept drawn? Who dared to open it just now? It is some low trick, and I will find it out. Who has been here, I say?"

"No one, my lord," answered the shaking Simpkins in an injured tone. "Your lordship's orders have always been carefully obeyed; no *living soul*" (slightly emphasised) "has been here since dinner."

My husband looked, and was, terribly perplexed. Simpkins being, as he felt, more of a friend than

a servant, one whose family, too, had lived on the estate as long as his own, and whose word was always to be trusted, could not for one moment be supposed capable of conniving at some low practical joke. How, then, was it possible to account for . . . ?

"Your lordship's orders," repeated Simpkins emphatically, "have been obeyed to the letter; but it is *my* opinion, as well as that of my colleagues" (it is impossible to adequately describe Simpkins' dignity as he said these words) "that it is the work of the Evil One! We can't keep that curtain" (Simpkins pronounced it "cutting") "closed, do what we will. And I—we" (looking apprehensively around, and speaking in a terrified whisper) "have *actually seen the 'and that opens it* —a woman's 'and with a dagger hin it!"

After such evidence as this, the picture was condemned to be banished; but none of the servants would aid in its removal. They were afraid to touch it, they said. So two strange workmen were called in to carry it upstairs: one had his foot badly crushed, the picture having slipped and fallen upon it, while the other received *a long, painful scratch on the arm*—"from a nail,"

he supposed; the nail, however, was nowhere to be found, and the scratch was exactly in shape like the one which once appeared on my arm.

And then it was, when the portrait was again lodged in its garret, that my husband remembered and repeated to me the words that had fallen from young Hoffman's lips on the day that he brought away the picture from Belgium—words which he had scarcely noticed at the time.

THE END.

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co
London & Edinburgh